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ABSTRACT

This digest assesses the human rights situation of poor and marginalized children in urban areas around the world, considering the range of problems that these children and their families face, drawing attention to the need for actions based on a knowledge of urban areas and potential urban advantages, and examining the capacity of competent, accountable, and transparent urban governance to promote the rights of children, enable communities and poor households to influence public policies and actions, and ensure tangible and significant progress in improving conditions in urban settlements. The digest focuses on "Why Look at Children in Urban Areas?"; "Children's Rights and Good Governance"; "Global Trends in Urban Development"; "Urban Poverty and Exclusion" (looking at numbers and factors contributing to urban poverty); "Conditions for Children in Urban Areas" (physical infrastructure, housing, and social dimensions); "Taking Action" (promoting the role of children, child participation in local governance, the Child Friendly Cities movement, enhancing data collection, and improving physical and social conditions); and "Links" (major United Nations agencies and international and regional non-government organizations). (Contains 204 references.) (SM)

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No.10 - November 2002

POVERTY AND EXCLUSION AMONG URBAN CHILDREN

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Innocenti Research Centre
Florence, Italy

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POVERTY AND EXCLUSION AMONG URBAN CHILDREN

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EDITORIAL

For many, the image of a malnourished child, a child living in miserable circumstances and lacking access to basic social services, has a rural backdrop. Now, with a net increase in the urban population, this picture is increasingly set in the slums of the world's mega-cities. As Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General has acknowledged, "Cities are often described as cradles of civilization, and sources of cultural and economic renaissance but, for the roughly one third of the developing world's urban population that lives in extreme poverty, they are anything but that. Most of these urban poor have no option but to find housing in squalid and unsafe squatter settlements or slums. And even though the population of cities, like countries, has on average become older, slum dwellers are getting younger".[1]

This Digest addresses the reality of these children. It highlights the chronic poverty and marginalisation they face: many spend their days digging in rubbish tips for something they can sell, and their nights on the streets, where they risk violence and exploitation. They lack a secure home, can't afford access to health services or education, and there is nowhere safe for them to play. Denied a voice, they can neither denounce the conditions in which they live, nor realise their enormous potential to inform solutions.

Poverty and exclusion among urban children represent a missed opportunity to promote good local governance and to ensure the universal realisation of human rights. Around the world, poverty and exclusion among urban children testify to a lack of commitment to promoting good local governance and to ensuring the universal realisation of human rights. Where the opportunity to guarantee that quality basic social services are made available and accessible to all children is not grasped, and where the undertaking to develop urban plans that are respectful of children's rights and informed by children's needs and aspirations is not made, many urban communities will continue to be blighted by deprivation.

Conditions in cities all over the world are testament to the reality that many urban children are far from being the priviledged citizens we might imagine. But cities also represent the frontline for effective action to overcome some of the most serious obstacles to children's development and the enjoyment of their rights.

There is therefore room for optimism. And this Digest offers many examples of cities and towns where municipal authorities have grasped the opportunity to help children living in poverty, to promote their social inclusion, to ensure respect for their human rights and to involve them as partners in urban decision-making. These examples show that problems in urban areas are not insurmountable and, with good local governance, cities can become 'child-friendly', translating at the municipal level international commitments to ensure the universal realisation of children's rights. This is the vision of the Digest.

And this was also the approach followed by the UN Special Session on Children in May 2002, which concluded that enhanced partnerships with local governments and authorities are critical to ensure that children are at the centre of development agendas.[2] Mayors and local leaders have a central role to play: their leadership and commitment are instrumental in promoting the development of municipal plans that guide policy decisions and budgetary allocations, identifying concrete goals and targets, as well as monitoring progress and reporting on achievements. They hold the key to ensuring the mainstreaming of children's interests in urban affairs and to creating effective opportunities for children to influence their world, gain greater responsibility and experience citizenship. In brief, there is a unique opportunity to institutionalise a system of local governance for children's rights.

This Digest is a contribution to a pool of existing knowledge on how to reverse negative trends in urban areas and ensure the human rights of urban children. We have the knowledge and the means. Now it is time for action.

Marta Santos Pais
Director, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

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SCOPE OF THE DIGEST

This Digest assesses the human rights situation of poor and marginalised children in urban areas around the world. It considers the range of problems that these children and their families face; it draws attention to the need for actions based on a knowledge of urban areas and potential 'urban advantages'; and examines the capacity of competent, accountable and transparent urban governance to promote the rights of children, enable communities and poor households to influence public policies and actions, and ensure tangible and significant progress in improving conditions in urban settlements.

In highlighting the implications of poverty and exclusion for children in urban areas, this Digest does not in any way seek to divert attention from the reality of children in rural areas, or from rural poverty. Rather, it seeks to redress an imbalance which has often caused the specific situation of children in the world's urban settlements to be assigned insufficient importance, both by governments and by international organisations.

While this Digest necessarily covers issues as diverse as air pollution and children's participation in decision making, and ranges from outlining global urban trends to providing concrete examples of positive practices in poor urban neighbourhoods, the common and consistent thread is provided by the theme of good urban governance, and of the serious implications for children where this is absent.

WHY LOOK AT CHILDREN IN URBAN AREAS?

As of 2002, around a billion children live in urban areas – close to half the world's children. They live in sprawling mega-cities and in provincial towns, in cities that have existed for centuries and in rapidly growing centres within areas still perceived as predominantly rural. Most of the world's urban children – over 80 per cent of them – live in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and their numbers are growing fast.[3] Africa, one of the least urbanized regions, already has more than twice as many urban children as North America.[4]

Urban children are generally considered to be better off than rural children: healthier, better housed, better educated and with access to a wider range of services and opportunities. Cities can indeed offer these advantages, but the reality is that hundreds of millions of urban children live in deep poverty,[5] their rights neglected, their needs unmet, their prospects damaged by conditions that threaten their health and undermine their development. Box 1 gives an example of conditions in a squatter settlement in Johannesburg, but many urban children around the world live in conditions similar to these.[6]

There are at least two reasons why urban children *should* be expected to enjoy greater opportunities than rural children as regards survival and development. The first is that urban areas provide significant economies of scale and proximity for the delivery of health care and education, piped water and emergency services and the provision for good quality sanitation and drainage. The second is that many cities have a more prosperous economic base than rural areas, providing higher average incomes for large sections of the population and greater possibilities for governments or private utilities to fund basic services.

Making use of this potential 'urban

Box 1: Growing up in Canaansland, Johannesburg[7]

Canaansland, a squatter camp in a busy part of Johannesburg, is a community of 350 families living on a little over an acre [approximately 0.5 hectares] of land with no toilets, no electricity and one water point. It was one of the research sites for an international research programme on 'Growing up in Cities' which explored children's understandings of their own urban environments with a view to improving these based on children's recommendations. The children, aged 10 to 14, who made up the Canaansland group had clear views on the community's problems: "It is not a good place," said one child, "There is a lot of fighting. The roads are too busy and people drive very fast. It smells very bad when there is a wind and when it rains."

All the children spoke of the lack of facilities. The single water tap served over 1000 people, and most of the children regularly had to wait to fill heavy containers for their families. The only available toilets were in commercial locations across busy streets, and many people used a nearby vacant lot, and the children were revolted at the stench that surrounded them. They were also bothered by the general filth of the camp, where rubbish was cleaned up and removed only at irregular intervals.

Children's homes were small and crowded, and often did not keep out the wind and rain. It was difficult to deal with the cold in winter – heating was possible only by using open braziers, and children were aware of the danger of toxic fumes, and the ease with which fire might spread through their crowded camp. The lack of electricity meant that doing homework was almost impossible, and even during the day there was not enough light in their homes for reading or writing.

The violence and quarrels in the community upset all the children. They spoke of adult drinking problems, of frequent brawls, gun shots at night, high noise levels, and difficulty in sleeping. Most adults paid little attention to the frequent violence, but the children found it frightening.

Because of their identity as squatters, children felt stigmatized and humiliated by the surrounding community. They were accused of dirtying shopping areas and public toilets, and when they window-shopped, they were treated like potential thieves and forbidden access to stores. Girls spoke of being kicked, slapped and verbally abused by passers-by when they played on the pavement at the edge of the camp, and it was common for traffic to speed up when they played on the street, scattering children and their possessions.

The children came up with a range of practical suggestions for improving life in the camp; but when they met with the Mayor to present their work, they focused on their four most significant issues: improved housing that would keep out inclement weather; the urgent need for sanitation; a place to call their own where they could do their homework; and the need for people from settled homes in the vicinity to treat them with greater respect.

advantage' depends on structures of competent, effective local governance in cities and smaller urban areas. The application of the principles of good governance – including accountability, equity and social inclusion – at the local level, with the full and committed involvement of municipal government structures, is a prime opportunity to promote and act upon a commitment to children's rights. This commitment can be translated into all aspects of urban life, from planning, policy making and budgetary decsions, to service provision and the introduction of participatory structures.

In the absence of 'good governance' – and with the lack of investment in infrastructure, basic social services and waste management that this absence implies – an urban concentration of children and their families becomes a serious disadvantage (Box 2). As the World Health Organization has recognized, when infrastructure and services are lacking, urban settlements are among the world's most life-threatening environments.[8] Many low income countries still have urban child mortality rates as high as 100 to 200 per 1000 live births. In Africa, for example, some of the highest urban mortality rates for children include Chad (190 in 1996), Madagascar (122 in 1997, up from 112 in 1992), Mozambique (169 in 1997), and Zambia (174 in 1996, up from 149 in 1992).[9] Moreover, high as these aggregate figures are, they mask even higher levels in poor urban districts. Figures from India, where 24 per cent of the total urban population of 285 million are classified as poor,[10] indicate that more than half of the country's poor urban children are underweight and/or stunted; a high proportion are severely undernourished – 23 per cent in weight-for-age and 30 per cent in height-for-age.[11] 50 per cent of poor urban children are only partially vaccinated, and another 18 per cent are not vaccinated at all.[12] More than 80 per cent of poor children in India's urban areas have anaemia.[13]

A final compelling reason for considering the situation of urban children lies in the fact that, despite the long term trend towards more urbanized societies, many governments in Africa, Asia and Latin America still lack a fully developed urban policy, despite there being substantial differences between most rural and urban areas as regards the factors that pose the greatest threats to child survival, protection and development. Clearly, effective programmes for poor and excluded children depend on an understanding of these differences.

Box 2: Characteristics of urban areas which generally distinguish them from rural areas in low and middle-income nations[14]

Higher concentrations of people, enterprises, vehicles, and their wastes mean ***greater health risks*** in urban areas if provision for infrastructure, services and waste management is absent. However there is also a ***greater capacity for management of health problems*** when there is competent local government. This is because of proximity and economies of scale in provision of basic infrastructure and services, and higher capacity to pay by households and enterprises.
A different range of occupational health and safety risks, for example, levels of exposure to industrial chemicals and wastes, dust, dangerous machinery, excessive heat. Specific groups, such as waste-pickers, face particularly high risks.
Greater vulnerability to 'natural' disasters for many urban dwellers because the only land to which they have access for housing is at high risk from floods, landslides, earthquakes etc.
Greater reliance on cash income for food, fuel, water, housing (or land on which it can be built), building materials, transport and waste disposal, especially in the larger or more economically successful cities. Less reliance on access to natural resources for subsistence or livelihood.
Greater vulnerability to price rises or falls in income (as more necessities have to be paid for); less possibility of subsistence production or foraging to compensate.
Greater reliance on housing as an economic resource; in terms of location (poor groups often live on dangerous sites because these provide better or cheaper access to employment or income-earning opportunities); as an asset (for owners, even if ownership is uncertain); as an income earner (renting rooms, space for household enterprise).
Greater reliance on illegal solutions; a higher proportion of households live on illegally occupied land, or illegal subdivisions, tapping piped water and electricity networks illegally. Consequently, they run a greater risk of eviction.
More diverse, and more transient populations in many cities or particular city districts, which can weaken the basis for co-operative action, especially in areas with cheap rental accommodation, but ***greater scope for joint action***, community mobilization and negotiation with government for infrastructure and services, especially within democratic structures.
Greater potential impact of 'good' local government because of economies of scale and proximity with respect to the provision of infrastructure and basic services, and more highly developed communication networks. This in turn provides a firm foundation for the promotion of democratic participation.

Of course, none of the above is exclusively urban, since many rural areas have some of these characteristics – for instance many poor rural dwellers are at risk from eviction and face serious occupational health and safety risks from farm equipment and agricultural chemicals. Nor does every urban area have all the above – many urban dwellers work on farms or engage in urban agriculture for example. Many households also have both rural and urban components to their livelihoods or survival strategies.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

In any context, urban or rural, good governance and the full enjoyment of human rights are mutually reinforcing: human rights inform the principles of good governance and, in turn, a key characteristic of good governance is the promotion of these rights (Box 3).

The world's urban settlements provide particularly fertile ground for the establishment and development of systems of good local governance guided by human rights principles and, in particular, for the application of the general principles[15] and other provisions of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). While all provisions of the CRC apply to all children in every situation, some articles are particularly salient in the urban context:

- *Article 16*: No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence ...
- *Article 18*: States Parties shall render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities ... shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children. ... shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child-care services and facilities for which they are eligible.
- *Article 24*: States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health

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Box 3: The principles of good governance[16]

Put simply, governance is, at one and the same time, the process of decision making and the means by which these decisions are implemented. In an urban context, it involves both formal and informal actors, such as municipal authorities, service providers, the local representatives of central government, NGOs, private sector interests, the media, community groups, grassroots organizations and, crucially, citizens themselves. Good governance has eight major characteristics:

1. It promotes and encourages **participation**, including that of children.
2. It requires **respect for the rule of law**, and the full protection of human rights.
3. It involves **transparency** in decision-making, and information is freely available and easily understandable to all.
4. It is **responsive**, implementing decisions and meeting needs within a reasonable time frame.
5. It is **consensus-oriented**, involving the mediation of different interests in society and a sensitivity towards the relative influence of different actors, including the poorest and most marginalised.
6. It promotes **equity and inclusiveness**, such that all members of society feel that they have a stake in that society.
7. It means that processes and institutions produce **effective** results that meet the needs of society, while making the most **efficient** use of resources and promoting sustainability.
8. It is founded upon **accountability**, not only of governmental institutions, but also of the private sector and civil society organizations.

and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services. ... shall take appropriate measures: (a) To diminish infant and child mortality; (b) To ensure the provision of necessary medical assistance and health care to all children with emphasis on the development of primary health care; (c) To combat disease and malnutrition ... through the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking water, taking into consideration the dangers and risks of environmental pollution;

- *Article 27*: States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. ... States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.
- *Article 28*: States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and ... they shall, in particular: (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all; ... (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.
- *Article 31*: States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
- *Article 32*: States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

The explicit right of every child to enjoy adequate living conditions, a safe environment and access to housing and basic social services, including education and health, is also underlined in other human rights standards. Article 25 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services ... ". These or similar principles are included in other important instruments:

- Article 21 of the 1951 International Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees;
- Principle 2 of the 1961 International Labour Organisation Recommendation No. 115, on Worker's Housing;
- Article 5 of the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- Article 11 of the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- Article 43 of the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Formal declarations from high level international encounters help to re-emphasize periodically the importance of promoting specific initiatives for urban dwellers including transparent and accountable governance, fair distribution of income, provision of health services and free education, adequate shelter and nutrition, promotion of employment opportunites, and a constant attention to the special needs of women and children. Notable in this regard are the Declaration on Human Settlements adopted by the UN Conference on Human Settlement (Habitat) in 1976 in Vancouver, the Declaration on Social Development adopted at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, and the Declaration on Human Settlements adopted in 1996 by the UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul.

In addition, *A World Fit for Children*, the

Box 4: Special Rapporteur on adequate housing[17]

"The human right to adequate housing is the right of every woman, man, youth and child to gain and sustain a secure home and community in which to live in peace and dignity."[18]

Children's rights to adequate housing cannot be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense, but rather understood to encompass living in security, peace and dignity. This concept is interrelated to and interdependent with nearly every other right in the CRC,[19] and its importance is reflected in the UN mandate for the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing.

The Special Rapporteur has drawn attention to the integral link between children's housing rights and living conditions, which are essential to their cognitive, physical, cultural, emotional and social development, particularly as children are disproportionately vulnerable to the negative effects of inadequate and insecure living conditions.[20]

The Special Rapporteur works closely with the Committee on the Rights of the Child to analyse children's enjoyment of the right to housing throughout the world, and to follow up on the recommendations adopted by the Committee. The Committee and the Special Rapporteur identified several issues of common interest, including the relevance of gender and ethnic discrimination, the issue of forced evictions, the concept of 'safety' as an indispensable element of the right to 'secure' housing, and the connections between the right to adequate housing and the right to privacy, as well as the right to the highest attainable standard of health, including mental health.

Within the broad framework of his mandate, and in cooperation with UNICEF and civil society, the Special Rapporteur is working to further examine issues related to lack of access to basic social services, forced evictions and poverty, as well as national and international economic policies, and their particular impact on children and the right to housing.

outcome document from the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children held in May 2002, emphasizes the role of local governments and authorities to strengthen partnerships at all levels and ensure that children are at the centre of agendas for development.[21] The same document also draws attention to the importance of promoting national and sub-national policies for children, and to developing capacity – and particularly community capacity – for monitoring and assessment.[22]

GLOBAL TRENDS IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Today, most of the world's urban population is to be found in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Indeed, one quarter of the world's urban population lives in only two countries – China and India. Europe too has a sizeable share of the urban population – one fifth of the world's 3 billion urban dwellers (Figure 1). During the 20th century, the world's urban population grew more than tenfold and the average size of the 100 largest cities increased more than eightfold. The proportion of people living in urban areas grew from less than 15 per cent in 1900 to an estimated 48 percent by 2002.[23] This change has been fuelled by expansion in the world's economy, most of which has taken place in industrial and service enterprises located in urban areas. Since most economic growth continues to be in urban-based enterprises, the trend towards ever larger urban populations is likely to continue.

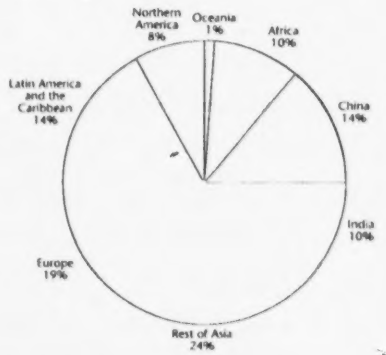
Where cities have demonstrated dramatic growth rates, this usually reflects a rapid expansion of economic activities. Such growth is frequently associated with very poor conditions – but growth, of itself, is rarely the reason for this. For example, the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre has been one of the world's fastest growing cities over the last 40 years, but nonetheless, citizens there have a life expectancy of 74 years[24] compared to a national average of 67.[25] Rapid growth rates alone are therefore an inadequate explanation for poor conditions: cities such as Miami, Houston, Dallas and Phoenix all grew faster than most large African and Asian cities over the last century. Indeed, some of the worst conditions are to be found in cities around the world that have grown slowly or even declined in size.

Many of the largest and fastest growing cities in all regions are those that have been most successful in increasing their role within the globalizing economy. Some of these cities, such as Dhaka and Bangkok, are their nation's capital and largest city. Others, such as Shenzen in China and Bangalore in India, are changing the urban geography of their nation as they grow to challenge older and larger cities.

Despite the growing influence of globalization, local political and demographic contexts continue to shape the form that urbanization takes. A significant part of the 'urban explosion' in many African nations around independence was simply women and children joining their husbands and fathers, once colonial restrictions had been removed. In addition, in many parts of Africa, urban change has also been profoundly influenced by civil wars and the sheer number of refugees seeking new bases for their livelihoods. HIV/AIDS has also had a significant impact on rural-urban population movements, as children who have lost their parents to this disease (and who may have been unable to inherit their parents' land because they do not have a birth certificate to prove their parentage) are drawn to urban centres in search of a livelihood.

Dramatic urban change in China since the late 1970s has been driven not only by rapid expansion in its economy, but also by the reduction in controls on rural to urban population movement. In much of Latin America, urban trends have been shaped by the introduction of, or return to, democratic rule, the shift from import substitution to export promotion, serious economic problems and, in many cases, decentralization and stronger democracy at the level of local government. The dissolving of the Soviet Union and its economic bloc and the breaking up or reshaping of several states in Europe (including those tragically affected by civil wars) has inevitably had an impact upon the urban systems and trends of these countries. Urban growth can also be influenced simply by rapid population growth rates.[27] Thus, while broad economic changes remain the main influence on the proportion of the world's population living in urban areas, there are many other factors that influence the scale and nature of urban change within each nation or region.

Figure 1: The distribution of the world's 3 billion urban dwellers, 2000[26]



URBAN POVERTY AND EXCLUSION

Looking at the numbers

Aggregate statistics almost inevitably indicate that urban populations are better off than national populations as a whole because middle and upper income groups tend to be concentrated in urban areas. This does not mean, however, that the whole population of 'privileged' cities benefits from this relative wealth. Where statistics are available for low-income districts, they often show infant or child mortality rates many times higher than the city average, and levels of provision for water and sanitation far below the average. In low-income countries it is common for between a third and half of a nation's urban population, or that of a particular city, to

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have incomes below the official poverty line, and in many cases more than half[28] (Table 1). Proportions below poverty lines can be high even in wealthier nations – for instance, in 1990 Buenos Aires was one of the wealthiest cities in Latin America, but nevertheless, 34.5 percent of the city's population were classified as poor.[29] The proportion is now much higher as a result of the economic crisis.

Table 1: *Proportions of the urban population falling below official poverty lines*

Year	Country	Percentage
1990	El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti[30]	60-71%
1993-4	India[31]	33%
1995	Bangladesh[32]	61%
1996	Zimbabwe[33]	48%
2000	Angola[34]	60%

But many of these official statistics still underestimate the gravity of the situation: they purport to measure the proportion of people 'living in poverty,' but exclude any criteria related to housing conditions, including access to water and sanitation. Almost all official statistics use a poverty line based on estimates of the cost of food needed to meet nutritional requirements, with a small amount generally included for non-food essentials. This assumes that households are not poor when their income rises above this defined level. According to these definitions, a household with no secure home, no provision for water, sanitation and electricity, no access to health care, and no children in school would be considered as suffering the same deprivations as a household with the same income but with all these. This helps explain why estimates of the scale of urban poverty worldwide are so much lower than the estimates for the number of people living in very poor quality housing that lacks basic services.[35]

Basing poverty lines primarily on the cost of food is especially problematic in cities, since a defining characteristic of cities is the commercialization of the majority of goods and services.[36] Most urban households face high costs for non-food essentials including rent, water and sanitation, transport, keeping children in school, health care and medicines, fuel and child-care. Many low-income households pay 20-30 per cent of their income on rent.[37] A study of the small Russian town of Novocherkassk, with a population of some 190,000, found that while rent and utility charges represented only 5 per cent of the total expenditure of the richest tenth of the population, this figure was as high as 66 per cent for the poorest tenth.[38] It is common for water, health care and transport each to take 5 or more per cent of income.[39]

Many poor urban households pay particularly high prices for essentials. For instance, in illegal settlements, those who have to use water vendors or kiosks often pay many times more per litre than middle or upper income groups with piped water connections. In Bangkok, Thailand, for example, the price of water from a vendor can be up to five times higher than the price charged by the public utility; in Nouakchott, Mauritania, the price can be 10 times higher – and as much as 40 times higher when there is a water shortage; while in Karachi, Pakistan, the price from private vendors can be anything between 28 and 83 times higher than that of the public utility.[40] The fact that poverty lines in low and middle income countries make little or no allowance for the cost of housing and associated services is particularly puzzling, given that these costs are critical in influencing poverty levels in most high income countries. Moreover, official statistics can overstate access to urban services because the criteria upon which they are based can give a misleading impression of the standard and availability of facilities. For example, official surveys may classify urban residents living within 100 metres of a piped water supply as 'adequately served' even when there are 500 people to each tap and the supply is intermittent or lacking. They may classify households with 'access to a latrine' as adequately served even when this latrine is shared by many households and poorly maintained, or is a public toilet to which regular access is both difficult and costly. Of course, official statistics on service provision may overstate the extent and quality of provision in rural areas too.

Understanding the scale of the problem is complicated by the fact that countries use different criteria for setting urban poverty lines, thus limiting the validity of international comparisons. A low proportion living in poverty may simply reflect an unrealistic poverty line. Universal poverty lines (for instance the US$1 a day poverty line) are even more misleading, since they take no account of differences in the income needed to avoid poverty between and within countries.

Few official development statistics give specific attention to the poverty status of urban children. While the 1980s saw proven child survival gains for most countries, national indicators show limited progress in child well being from 1990 to 2000. Reductions in infant and child mortality rates slowed or stopped in many low and middle income nations; in African nations most affected by HIV/AIDS, civil conflict and declining economy, they rose sharply.[41] The incidence of malnutrition declined far less during the 1990s than in the two previous decades, except in Latin America. In Africa and the Middle East the number of underweight children rose during the 1990s.[42] There are few indicators of how these trends are played out in urban areas. In Latin America, child poverty rose in absolute terms and faster than overall poverty as worsening income distribution pushed up the number of working poor with dependent children.[43] Given that more than three quarters of the region's population live in urban areas, this would seem to imply that these areas have experienced a rise in the level of child poverty.

In most high-income nations, the basis on which poverty is defined has changed from absolute to relative measures, with poverty lines set as a percentage of median income. Households with incomes below 40 or 50 per cent of the national median are defined as poor. In part, this reflects success in reducing absolute poverty. But even 'relative' poverty can mean hunger, poor health, dilapidated housing, inadequate schools, violent neighbourhoods, social exclusion and little opportunity. Furthermore, some of the nations with the highest levels of child poverty, or the largest increases in poverty over the last two decades, are also nations where per capita income has increased substantially – notably the USA and the United Kingdom. Recent figures in the United Kingdom indicate that one out of three children is poor, that is, living below half the mean level of income on an 'after housing costs' basis, although the proportion is now falling.[44] In the USA, where poverty rates are highest in urban areas, over 30 per cent of urban children fall below poverty lines;[45] the proportion of urban children considered to be at high risk has grown by 58 per cent since 1976.[46] By contrast, several other high-income nations, including Belgium, Norway and Sweden, have less than 5 per cent of children living in poverty.[47] This is largely due to social and economic policies in these countries that address inequalities.

Factors contributing to urban poverty

The factors contributing to poverty among children and their families in urban areas exist at every level from the most local to the

international. The immediate causes of deprivation are often more obvious and easily acted upon, but real change also requires action on the complex and wide-ranging causes that underpin this condition, including the lack of community empowerment and participation. For example, initiatives to enrol poor urban children in school should address the factors that subsequently push many children to drop out of education and seek work. These include the economic situation of the child's family and the costs incurred by the child attending school, the facilities available to and the organizational capacity of local communities, the unequal distribution and quality of schools within urban areas, prevailing discrimination against certain groups, including girls, immigrants, minorities and children with disabilities, and the failure of governments, both local and national, to respond in practical terms to education as a basic human right.

No summary of the underlying and basic causes of child deprivation can do justice to all such factors. This Digest focuses on three key themes: the quality of local and national governance, growing inequality within nations, and the difficulties faced by many countries in developing a stable economic base.

The quality of local and national governance

Shifting attention to the causes that underpin poverty and exclusion among urban children requires a new focus on two of the most complex and politically controversial issues within nations – the distribution of power, authority and resources among different levels of government, and the quality of 'governance' in terms of its responsiveness, accountability, transparency and quality of engagement with civil society. Almost all policies, programmes and decisions by governments (and international agencies) have implications for urban children. Urban areas, by their nature, are points of concentration for, and connection to, the monetary economy. The stability of urban households with children is tied to the underlying and basic causes of economic change in urban areas, and the well-being of urban children (as well as rural children) is tied to good economic performance nationally, and to fair distribution of the benefits of economic growth – through a commitment to pro-poor growth, stable incomes, unexploitative working practices, education and training programmes.

The size of inter-governmental transfers from central government to regional and local authorities is highly relevant for children because most responsibility for basic infrastructure and services lies with local government agencies,[49] and most urban governments in Africa, Asia and Latin America lack the fiscal base to meet their multiple responsibilities for child health and development. There are huge differentials between high and low income nations in the revenue per person controlled by local authorities (varying by factors of 100 or more), and even larger differentials in their capital investment capacity per person.[49] In high income nations, the web of local institutions that serve, support and protect children (and parents) is taken for granted. Coverage for some services may be sub-standard, and some groups are ill-served or excluded, but the vast majority of the urban population is served.

Growing inequality within nations

Much child deprivation is linked to inequality within nations – including nations with good economic performance. According to available data, income inequality has increased in most nations, especially in Latin America and countries previously in the Soviet Bloc (which tend to be among the most urbanized of low and middle income nations).

Rising average urban incomes do not necessarily mean falling child poverty: in the United States child poverty rates have increased 31 per cent in urban areas and 50 per cent in suburban areas since the 1970s, despite the fact that real per capita incomes are much higher today than they were in 1970.[50] Even falling unemployment may not mean a reduction in child deprivation: in the UK, the proportion of households with children with no income earner grew between 1985 and 1996, even though unemployment levels fell.[51]

An analysis of child poverty in rich nations shows the importance of government policies and redistributive taxes as a means of reducing poverty levels or preventing them from rising too much during periods of economic difficulty; it indicates, too, that the withdrawal of state support for the unemployed or those on low income can increase child poverty even during periods of economic prosperity. There is no evidence that measures to keep down child poverty have an adverse effect on economic growth. Many of the world's wealthiest nations also have the lowest levels of child poverty and the highest levels of inter-governmental transfer. It is worth noting the emphasis among many nations with the lowest levels of child poverty on getting the unemployed back to work.[52]

In many low and middle income nations, governments have been ineffective in establishing social policies that improve provision for children in general and that support the most vulnerable children. The liberalizing agenda has cut the resources available to governments, but without ensuring that the poorest and most vulnerable groups are not most affected. In China, for example, sweeping socio-economic reform is providing positive benefits to a large number of people. However some segments of society are being left behind. The disappearance of guaranteed housing, medical services, pensions and other basic services and the reform of the state-owned enterprise system are provoking new kinds of economic, social and psychological stress for disadvantaged families.

In this rapid development process, children, especially girls, become vulnerable to and, often, victims of neglect, abuse and exploitation.[53] The serious impacts on children of the macro-economic reforms promoted by the World Bank and the IMF in the early 1980s came as a surprise to most of their proponents, who had assumed that the resulting economic growth would more than compensate for short term losses. Rarely was provision made to protect the social expenditures with most importance for child development. This is still the case in many nations. Public expenditure on health is very low and stagnating in low income nations and falling marginally in middle income nations.[54]

The effects of the global economy

The very poor economic performance of the world's low income nations and the economic deterioration in many middle income nations underlies much child deprivation. It also underpins the very large debt burdens that so many nations face. A globalizing world economy creates winners and losers,[55] and growing inequality between nations presents particular challenges for children.

Many nations have faced significant declines in per capita incomes in recent years. The situation in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and most of Sub-Saharan Africa during the 1990s has been particularly extreme.[56] Sharp rises in unemployment, reductions in wages and, often, increases in the price of basic goods have had serious impacts upon large sections of the urban (and rural) population. In Tajikistan, for example, by 1996 real GDP had fallen to 40 per cent of its 1990 level,[57] while government expenditure dropped from 65 per cent of GDP in 1992 to 16 per cent in 1998.[58]

It is difficult to protect children from lower income households in the face of

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both falling incomes and declining government expenditures. Urban populations may be more vulnerable to these changes because of their dependence on the monetary economy for their livelihoods (just as larger sections of the urban population may benefit more from economic growth), but in most locations there are so many linkages between rural and urban areas that it is difficult to discuss these separately.[59] For instance, in Accra, Ghana's largest city, the proportion of the population living in poverty increased rapidly between 1987 and 1993, whereas it decreased in both rural areas and other urban areas.[60] But growing poverty in Accra may have serious impacts, including fewer job opportunities for rural dwellers, less remittance flows to rural (or other urban) areas, less urban demand for rural products, and more urban to rural migration, which in turn increases dependency burdens in rural areas. Strong rural-urban interactions and inter-dependencies mean that structural adjustment affects both rural and urban populations.[61] When rural poverty grows, this generally brings serious impacts to many urban areas, especially those whose economies depend on demand from rural producers and consumers.

CONDITIONS FOR CHILDREN IN URBAN AREAS

Urban areas present some very specific challenges for those in poverty, and these challenges, in turn, have significant and often disproportionate impacts on children and adolescents, undermining their rights and their well being in ways that require particular responses. This section considers the implications for children of a poor urban environment. The environment in urban settlements is extremely complex and is made up of a wide range of intricately linked elements. This Digest focuses on three of these elements – physical infrastructure, housing and the social context – while recognizing, of course, that these categories are intimately connected.

Physical infrastucture

Environmental conditions are generally particularly poor (and risky) in low income urban districts. Wherever there are high concentrations of people and of waste, the potential for contamination, contagion and disease is great. When this potential is not countered by effective provision, health costs are very high and infants and young children are disproportionately affected. Millions of urban infants and children die each year, and many more suffer from illnesses or injuries that can and should be prevented.[62] Age-related risk factors include immature immune systems, higher exposure to pathogens, greater susceptibility to particular chemicals and inadequate understanding of how to avoid hazards.[63]

In cities served by piped water, sanitation, drainage, waste removal and a good health care system, child mortality rates are generally around 10 per 1000 live births, and few deaths are the result of environmental hazards. In contrast, in cities or neighbourhoods with inadequate provision, it is common for child mortality rates to be 10 or 20 times this, and for environmental hazards to be major causes. And aggregate figures can disguise significant intra-urban variations, for example, surveys in seven settlements in Karachi found that infant mortality rates varied from 33 to as many as 209 per 1000 live births.[64] Differentials are also evident in cities in high income nations, although mortality rates are much lower and are not as closely related to environmental factors. In Glasgow, United Kingdom, in 1990, the infant mortality rate in a poor area was 47 per thousand live births, compared to 10 per thousand for a more affluent suburb.[65] Similarly, in Washington DC in 1997, infant mortality rates, broken down by ward, show considerable variation – from a rate of 2.8 per thousand in a high income area to a rate of 16 per thousand in one of the poorer wards.[66]

The information base for a precise identification of the relative importance of different causes or risk factors is limited: there is a clear need for better data if the dynamics and effects of urban poverty are to be understood and effective action is to be taken. For example, there are few city-level data on child morbidity in low and middle income nations, and even fewer on children's or caregivers' perceptions of their needs and priorities. There are, however, many detailed studies within particular urban neighbourhoods which provide strong evidence of the impacts that urban conditions can have.

Water and sanitation

Diarrhoeal diseases are still a primary cause of infant and child death for large sections of the world's urban population. Human excreta are the primary source of diarrhoeal disease pathogens.[67] When provision for water and sanitation is poor, diarrhoeal diseases and other diseases linked to contaminated water (such as typhoid) or contaminated food and water (such as cholera and hepatitis A) are among the most serious health problems within urban neighbourhoods – or whole cities. The impact of diarrhoeal diseases can be considerably underestimated since, when combined with malnutrition (as they often are), they can so weaken the body's defences that diseases such as measles and pneumonia become major causes of child death.[68] Long-term impacts for children are not restricted to health: a city study in Brazil has related early diarrhoeal disease in children to impaired cognitive functioning several years later.[69]

An essential factor in ensuring children's health is the availability of safe, sufficient water supplies and provision for sanitation – something frequently absent in poor urban settlements in low and middle income countries (Box 5). Too little water is a critical problem, making it impossible to maintain the sanitary conditions essential for preventing endemic disease that contributes so heavily to the death and repeated illness of many children.[70] When water has to be carried or bought by the bottle, many households make do with far less than they need to ensure children's health. In urban Brazil, infants were five times as likely to die in households using public standpipes as in those with water piped to the house.[71] In the absence of adequate supplies of clean water, the maintenance of hygiene during food preparation becomes especially difficult, and this, together with inadequate storage for food, contributes to the likelihood of contamination. Bottle-fed babies and young children being weaned are at particularly high risk.[72]

The impact of inadequate water provision is compounded by the effects of poor sanitation. Only a small proportion of poor urban residents have adequate provision for

Azerbaijan, 33 per cent of the urban population still use traditional pit latrines, and another 9.7 per cent use open pits.[73] Most urban centres in Africa and Asia and many in Latin America have no sewers.[74] Although non-sewered sanitation can work well, the sheer volume and concentration of human waste and waste waters in cities usually make these ineffective. Where sewers do exist, these are often open, presenting a serious risk to public health. Tens of millions of households in informal settlements only have access to overused and poorly maintained communal or public toilets – one settlement in Kumasi, Ghana, had 320 persons per latrine and long queues were inevitable.[75] Provision for sanitation is so poor in many cities that significant proportions of the population resort to open defecation.[76]

The use of public latrines is particularly problematic for young children. Taking a small child any distance to a toilet is impractical, and the darkness, smell and large pit openings in most latrines make their use unpleasant or even frightening for young children. Evidence from a number of urban settlements indicates that hardly any children under six use these latrines and that in most cases their excrement ends up being thrown into yards, drains or streets, creating a potent source of contamination. Women and adolescent girls may also be reluctant to use public latrines because these facilities afford little or no privacy, and the lack of security increases the risk of these women falling victim to sexual abuse or violence. They face similar problems of privacy and safety when the absence of sanitary facilities forces them to use open land.

The absence of drainage and garbage collection contributes further to the likelihood of contamination and disease. Most informal settlements have no service to collect solid waste. In many African cities, only 10-30 per cent of all urban households' solid wastes are collected, and services are inevitably most deficient for informal settlements.[77] Uncollected garbage, along with excreta, is often dumped in drainage ditches – which can quickly become clogged. When wastewater and storm water cannot be easily drained, flooding spreads waste and excreta widely through the surrounding area. Drainage is an especially serious concern for the many urban communities on steep or swampy land.[78] Children can be at particular risk, since they play wherever there is open land, and may be drawn to wade or play in standing water or to scavenge in piles of garbage. Furthermore, ways in informal settlements is a clear source of danger for small children.

Conditions may improve over time in many illegal or informal settlements through a combination of self-help, mutual cooperation and negotiation with government agencies for some public services. But at best this is a slow and haphazard process. Residents have to negotiate for every kind of infrastructure or service separately. In parts of cities where poorer groups are not living in illegal settlements – for instance in tenement districts – there is generally more provision for infrastructure, but conditions may be as bad as in most informal settlements because maintenance is generally poor and levels of overcrowding extreme.

The impacts of inadequate water, sanitation, drainage and waste removal are not limited to diarrhoeal diseases. Many case studies in low-income settlements have shown the high proportion of children who have debilitating intestinal worm infestations.[79] The prevalence among children of various skin and eye infections such as scabies and trachoma that are associated with a lack of water supplies for washing is also particularly high among those living in poor quality homes and neighbourhoods.[80] Moreover, malaria, which is often considered a rural disease, is urban areas. The occurrence of malaria is often related to poorly drained locations as the *Anopheles* mosquitoes breed on standing water.[81] Similarly, the diseases spread by *Aedes* mosquitoes (including dengue fever, dengue haemorrhagic fever and yellow fever) are related to poor drainage and to inadequate or intermittent water supplies, since these mosquitoes breed in standing water and water containers.[82] Many other disease-vectors, including houseflies, fleas, lice and cockroaches, thrive where there is poor drainage and inadequate provision for rubbish collection, sanitation and piped water.[83]

Chemical pollutants

Although they do not present the same health burden as biological pathogens, toxins and pollutants in water supplies and food, in the air and in unprotected dumps, are a world-wide concern. This is especially the case in urban areas and, disproportionately, in areas inhabited by the poor. Children are particularly vulnerable to harm from exposure because of their rapid growth and immaturity, both physiologically and metabolically.[84]

Lead ingestion is a particular problem for urban children, especially in countries where leaded fuel and paint are still used. In Kaduna, Nigeria, for instance, 92 per cent of children examined had blood lead

Box 5: Water and sanitation: examples of conditions in cities and smaller urban centres

BANGALORE (India): More than half of the 6 million inhabitants depend for water on public fountains, often with broken taps or pipes and damaged platforms.[85] Almost a third have little or no access to piped water. 113,000 have no access to a latrine, and defecation in the open is common.[86]

FAISALABAD (Pakistan): Two thirds of the 2 million inhabitants live in areas with little or no official provision for services; and most new housing and land development occurs without official approval. Less than half the population has piped water and less than a third is connected to the sewer system.[87]

LUANDA (Angola): In this city of some 4 million inhabitants, 75 per cent live in informal settlements with little or no infrastructure and services.[88]

IBADAN (Nigeria): Only 22 per cent of the population are served by the municipal water supply system, and the city has no sewer system. Inhabitants rely on pit latrines and latrines connected to septic tanks.[89]

NAIROBI (Kenya): More than half the population live in informal settlements squeezed onto less than 6 per cent of the city's land. Most plots in these settlements have no toilet or water connection.[90]

MBANDJOCK (Cameroon): Only about 20 per cent of the population (estimated at 20,000 in 1996) have access to piped water; the rest rely on wells and springs which test positive for faecal contamination. The city has no sewer system.[91]

FRONTIER TOWNS IN BRAZIL: In two small towns in Rondonia and three in Southern Para, between 44 and 95 per cent of households rely on 'informal' water supplies (local wells without pumps or water collected from rivers); between 67 and 95 per cent rely on 'informal' sanitation (defecation pit latrines or in the open).[92]

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households containing lead-based paint, a problem particularly in lower income areas with deteriorating housing stock; in the USA, this remains the most common environmental health problem affecting children.[94] Children are also at risk due to exposure to harmful chemicals, indeed, pesticides are increasingly becoming a source of concern in some inner city areas, where they are used to control roaches, rats and other vermin.[95]

The single most significant form of chemical pollutant in terms of children's health in low and middle income countries is indoor air pollution resulting from the use of coal or biomass fuels, poor quality stoves and inadequate ventilation. This is a problem in both rural and urban areas, but one from which children are less likely to have relief outdoors in towns and cities, given the poor quality of the outside air. All the same, indoor concentrations of pollutants can be many times higher than even the most polluted outdoor air, and infants and young children are often heavily exposed because they remain with their mothers as they cook or undertake other tasks within the home. The effect of these pollutants, combined with malnutrition, may retard growth and increase the incidence of acute respiratory infections.[96]

In many cities, the concentration and mix of ambient air pollutants is already high enough to cause illness and premature death for more susceptible individuals. Worldwide, 1.5 billion urban dwellers are exposed to ambient air pollution levels that exceed WHO standards – and in many cities, the concentration of pollutants is far above these standards.[97] Some groups are particularly vulnerable: the poorest 'scavenging' families who live and work in city refuse dumps regularly inhale toxic fumes from burning plastic and other dangerous substances. Generally, the prevalence and severity of asthma, along with other respiratory ailments, have increased alarmingly in recent years among urban children. Reasons are complex and include exposure to urban pollutants, together with allergens and the psychosocial stresses of urban life. Although this phenomenon has been documented chiefly in the high income countries, it is beginning to receive attention in other urban areas.[98]

Accidental poisonings are common, especially for one to three year olds, most often from kerosene, household products (for instance bleach) and medications. The risk of poisoning is greater in poor quality,

demands on parents mean that children are not always supervised. Unborn children are also at risk through their mother's expose to chemical pollutants, some of which can cause cancer or birth defects in the foetus or even kill it. Chemicals that are known to harm the foetus by transfer through the placenta include lead, methyl mercury, certain pesticides, PCBs and carbon monoxide.[99] In most low income settlements, however, the developing foetus is more at risk from the mother's nutritional deficiencies or from the impact of parasites and malaria on her health.

Physical hazards

Millions of urban children around the world are killed every year as a result of preventable injuries that occur within their homes and neighbourhoods, and tens of millions more are seriously injured. Heavy traffic, unprotected stairways and heights, unfinished houses, dangerous house sites, piles of debris and a scarcity of safe play space all expose children to high levels of risk.[100] The danger of injury increases when tired, over-worked caregivers are unable to provide adequate supervision. In countries where infectious and parasitic diseases are well controlled, unintentional injury ranks as the leading cause of death for children, accounting for almost 40 per cent of deaths in the one to 14 age group.[101] In countries where disease and nutritional problems still kill many children, the percentage of injury-related deaths is lower but the number of injuries per person is considerably higher, especially in the poorest urban communities.[102] Most documentation of children's injuries is based on hospital records, but there are good reasons to believe that these provide a very incomplete picture, since most children's injuries are not treated in hospitals, in part because of the expense and the lack of emergency transport. A community-based study in Ibadan, Nigeria, documented 1,236 injuries involving 436 children over three months: these included puncture wounds, lacerations, sprains and dislocations: less than 1 per cent were treated in formal health facilities.[103]

In urban and rural areas alike, falls are the single most common cause of injury, especially for younger children. Burns are common for children under four – from hot water or other hot fluids, and from accidents with open fires, stoves or kerosene appliances. High levels of overcrowding increase the likelihood of these events. A study in a Brazilian squatter settlement focused on 600 children under five, drawing on interviews

accident and 12 per cent of these were serious enough to have required care in a clinic or hospital. Falls accounted for 53 per cent of these accidents, followed by cuts (17 per cent) and burns (10 per cent). Many of the falls were linked to the rough terrain of the settlement. The age of the child was an important determinant of accidents, and peaks in accidents were in the second or fifth years of life.[104]

Road accidents are among the most common causes of serious injury in cities in both high and low income countries. But the rapid growth of road traffic in many low income and most middle income nations, along with poorly maintained roads, multiple use of roadways and an absence of sidewalks and safe crossings has contributed to death and injury rates that are much higher than those in Europe or the USA, per road vehicle or passenger-mile.[105]

Access to play

Urban safety hazards and health risks have a significant effect on the play opportunities available to children. The availability of stimulating, diverse environments that allow them to pretend, experiment and learn are central to optimal development,[106] and have been related to resilience and improved outcomes in high-risk children.[107] Where homes are overcrowded, children may have little choice but to pass much of the day outside, and they can be extraordinarily resourceful in finding opportunities for play within even the most deprived environments – indeed many poor environments are rich in challenge and diversity. But they can also expose children to serious risk, and caregivers often respond by restricting play.

As children become more mobile, safety becomes an increasing concern. In conditions of urban poverty, excreta, broken glass, plastic bags, rotted food and burning materials are common hazards.

As children begin to move further from home their range of action and the number of risk factors that they face also increase – traffic in particular, but also stray dogs, standing water, open drains and debris-filled lots. Older children are more capable of identifying hazards, but the drive to play and explore and an enjoyment of risk-taking can override the need for caution. As a result, injury rates remain fairly constant throughout childhood, while the kinds of injuries tend to change with age.[108] Girls are generally at lower risk – a function of the greater restrictions imposed upon them.[109]

Opportunities for play are also restricted in high-income nations countries, where spaces for recreation in urban areas are often limited or, increasingly, involve a financial cost, while motor vehicles make streets hazardous for play and open areas are used for parking. Moreover, parents' working patterns, the distance between home and school and the growing use of the car mean that, outside school hours, many children are isolated in their homes and separated from their peers. This isolation may be heightened by parents' concern for the safety of their children in urban areas.

Housing

Many children's rights are rooted in the fundamental human right to decent, secure, affordable housing. Survival, health and optimal development are related to the quality of housing and its surroundings, access to livelihoods, schooling and other services are determined by its location, emotional security, family stability and even the quality of community relations are tied to security of tenure. But the urban poor struggle with housing – getting it, keeping it and coping with its inadequacies.

In most cities in low and middle income nations, between 25 and 50 per cent of the population live in illegally built settlements.[110] The quality of housing in these settlements is generally poor and often wretched, made of wood and plastic scavenged from dumps. This is a result not only of low incomes, but also of the reluctance of households to invest because of the uncertainty that they will be permitted to stay.

The location of informal settlements has a logic – they are concentrated in dangerous areas because the more dangerous the site, the greater the chance the residents can avoid eviction. The illegal settlements in a city often coincide with the areas most at risk from flooding or tidal inundation (this is the case for Accra, Bangkok, Buenos Aires, Delhi, Guayaquil, Jakarta, Monrovia, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Port Moresby and Recife) or landslides (Caracas, La Paz, Rio de Janeiro). Similarly, the most poorly constructed housing is also the most prone to severe earthquake damage, as testified by recent devastating quakes in the Colombian town of Armenia (January 1999), the Turkish towns of Adapazari, Golcuk, Istanbul and Izmit (August 1999), and Ahmedabad and Bhuj in the Indian state of Gujurat (January 2001). In many cities, poor groups also live in large concentrations in dilapidated, over-crowded inner city tenements and boarding houses: in these cases there is a trade-off between the far higher costs that households incur, for example with regard to rent and overcrowding, and the advantages provided by the location in terms of access to services and jobs. Furthermore, such problems are by no means restricted to low-income countries. Most poor people in urban areas in the USA, for instance, face serious housing problems, including rents that can exceed 50 per cent of their incomes.[111]

An unknown number – but certainly tens of millions – of the world's urban children and adults are actually homeless and sleep in public places (pavements, stations, parks, graveyards) or construction sites and work places. In central Mumbai (formerly Bombay), India, more than a hundred thousand people live on pavements, half of them children, because incomes are insufficient to allow them to live even in cheap peripheral areas.[112]

Homelessness is predominantly an urban phenomenon, in part because of the commercialisation of land and housing markets in the world's cities. Even in high income countries, research confirms that homelessness among families with children is increasing despite the recent years of affluence. The experience results in anxiety and depression for both children and parents, and can lead to the break up of families, as children are placed in foster care. In New York City, 60 per cent of residents in shelters for adults had children who could not be with them.[113]

Evictions

Millions of urban dwellers around the world live in fear of eviction (see Box 6 on demolitions and evictions in Manila). In the case of illegal settlements, even those on undesirable land are at risk. A household survey in six wards of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, in 1998 found that between 10 and 20 per cent of households had been evicted in the previous year.[114] A review of 40 eviction cases from around the world between 1980 and 1993 found that eight involved more than 100,000 persons, the largest involved 720,000 people evicted in Seoul, South Korea in preparation for the Olympic Games.[115] This was not a one time event, between 1960 and 1990, 5 million people were evicted from their homes in Seoul, many of them several times, often from sites provided after previous evictions.[116]

Of course, housing security is not just an economic and political issue. Box 7 describes the human impact of evictions in Mumbai, a successful city whose real estate market nevertheless fails to provide for the millions of low-income people that are essential to its economy.

The impact of eviction upon children can be particularly devastating. Evictions usually lead to homelessness and almost always to major economic upheaval. Possessions may be destroyed, family stability jeopardized, livelihoods and schooling threatened and social networks undermined. Children involved describe the violence, panic and confusion of the evictions and the experience of sleeping rough afterwards and being separated from friends. They also face the difficulties in re-establishing a stable life and frequent breakdowns in family relations as a consequence of the stress and economic difficulties.[117]

Evictions or displacement also arise from armed conflict, political violence, natural disasters and other emergencies that affect millions of adults and children each year, and often result in children being separated from their family. This can mean streams of refugees or displaced rural dwellers flooding into cities where housing is already at a premium. These displaced people are often resented by other urban dwellers. This is especially so if they are undocumented immigrants who often live in constant fear of discovery and forced repatriation. Children from 'illegal' or 'unwelcome' communities are highly vulnerable to prejudice, harassment, attack and incarceration, especially when they are forced to work for survival.

Housing quality and conditions

Even when poor urban families are securely housed, their housing is seldom adequate to support their children's survival, development and the highest attainable standard of health. Numerous hazards are posed by flimsy shelters on disaster-prone land. Accidental fires are common in areas with highly inflammable building materials, and are rendered still more serious by the lack or inadequacy of emergency services. In other cases, fires can be deliberately set to drive households off the land they have occupied. In high-income countries, fires are also related to poor housing conditions, but more often to faulty wiring, defective heating equipment and the absence of smoke alarms. There are also numerous health risks associated with poor quality housing construction and materials. Lack of screens exposes children to flies and mosquitoes, and porous walls and roofing harbour rodents and insect pests. Hard to clean floors increase contact with pathogens – the agents that cause disease – especially for babies and young children.[118]

Poor living environments, including

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noise and crowding, have long been recognized to generate stress, to undermine coping strategies, interfere with social relationships and contribute to physical and mental illness.[119] In high-income nations, overcrowding is measured by rooms per person, in low-income nations by persons per room. Three or more persons per room is common among poor urban populations, amounting to one or two square metres of space per person.[120] There are particular effects for children. In several countries, including India and the USA, noise and overcrowding have been related to poor cognitive development, behavioural problems, lower motivation, delayed psychomotor development, and difficulties with parents, including child abuse. Many of these outcomes have been related more generally to poor housing quality.[121]

Poor quality, overcrowded housing also favours the transmission of acute respiratory infections, which are the single largest cause of infant and child death in most low and middle income nations. Although these infections are by no means an urban phenomenon, they tend to be more prevalent in urban areas, as the frequency of contact, the density of the population and the concentration and proximity of both infectious and susceptible people promote disease transmission.[122] And, with limited health and financial resources, a child who contracts bronchitis or pneumonia in low and middle income nations is 50 times more likely to die than a child in Europe or North America.[123] Overcrowding is also a risk factor for the transmission of many other diseases that affect children, including diarrhoea and tuberculosis.[124]

Box 6: Demolitions and evictions in Metro Manila[125]

Evicting the urban poor, from either private or government land, and demolishing their housing is a long-standing practice in the Philippines' capital city. Between 1997 and 2000, some 26,000 families are believed to have been affected by demolitions. In 2001, the number of demolitions fell substantially, but nonetheless, at the end of that year a total of 152,000 families were thought to be living under the threat of demolition, some as part of initiatives to remove squatter settlements and others to make way for government infrastructure projects, including the construction of a high-speed train line. Still others are victims of illegal demolitions, where either official procedures are not fully followed, or no court order is issued.

Sometimes evictions are violent, involving police and even military personnel. Often violence erupts when procedures of notice of demolition are not observed or eviction takes place without offer of compensation or relocation. While the number of demolitions in 2001 decreased, the share of violent evictions increased. In December 2001, two international housing rights non-governmental organizations – the Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions and the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights – expressed serious concern over the situation, considering that it contravened ratified international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Social dimensions

In deprived urban areas where local governance is ineffective, resources are scarce and poorly distributed, communities empowerment is undeveloped, participatory channels are inexistent and support structures are weak, the impact of poverty on the child, the family and the fabric of society can be devastating. These outcomes are further compounded by difficulties associated with the physical environment in poor urban areas.

Box 7: Evictions in Mumbai[126]

In Mumbai, which has a population of some 12 million, there has been a systematic program of 'slum' clearance. In 1998 alone, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation evicted 167,000 people from their homes. Ambedkar Nagar was a community of 5000 people living on a reclaimed tidal mangrove swamp at the southern tip of Mumbai. Most of these people had been brought to the city for construction work, and had stayed on, turning this swamp land into valuable real estate through their labour. Over the past ten years, residents of this community have faced eviction 45 times. Each time, the demolition squad has destroyed some or all of the huts, and community members have repeatedly rebuilt them. In May 1998, despite promises made to lawyers, demolition workers and police moved in again and cleared the site. A resettlement site next to the old slum had been allocated to the community, but less than one third of the original households were given plots. Water, sanitation and drainage were not provided. Most of the residents had no choice but to rebuild their bamboo and plastic shelters once again on the swamp land.

Two months after this eviction, a research team undertook a study of women and children in the community, looking at their health status. Of a sample of 70 children between one and five years of age, 46 were found to be stunted and 12 to be wasted. There was widespread diarrhoea, respiratory infections including pneumonia and skin infections.

Even one eviction can upset the stability of a household. Repeated eviction wears away the capacity to recover. Each time their huts were demolished, women explained, money had to be found to rebuild. At first, they used their wages to buy materials, then began to turn to their savings, selling their limited supplies of jewellery and brass vessels. By the time of the 1998 eviction, most households had exhausted these avenues and had turned to moneylenders. Loans with interest rates of over 100 per cent were rarely repaid before another loan was needed for another shelter.

The quality of care

Inevitably, challenging living conditions undermine the capacity to provide optimal care for children. Overburdened caregivers are far more likely to have to leave children unsupervised or to cut corners in the many procedures that are necessary for healthy living – managing water supplies, keeping children clean, preparing and storing food hygienically and dealing with waste and excreta in the absence of adequate services. For example, reduced cooking times are thought to be connected with the retention of toxicity in boiled cassava meal, a staple food in many parts of Africa, especially when combined with a protein-deficient diet.[127]

Even high levels of parental knowledge about health, hygiene and safety cannot guarantee that children will be well provided for in very poor conditions. Heavy demands on caregivers in combination with long distances to work and the absence of viable alternatives can mean that there is no good source of care for many young children for long hours every day. Often the burden of care in households falls upon girls, who are left to look after their siblings while parents work. The psychological stresses imposed by living in poor urban conditions also take their toll. Caregivers in crowded and chaotic conditions have been found to be less responsive to their children, and more restrictive, controlling and punitive.[128] Under the many pressures of poverty this can escalate to abuse and neglect.[129]

When resources are scarce and mothers or child carers are faced with a heavy domestic workload or are forced to work long hours outside the home, one result can be malnutrition. This condition contributes

to more than half of all child deaths, to chronic illness and to a slowing of development on all fronts. It also undermines children's immune defences and increases their vulnerability to disease.[130] Young children during breastfeeding or weaning are particularly vulnerable, but there is also a risk for older children who are often given cheap food or sweets sold by street vendors or local shops. Urban price differentials may also mean that poor families have difficulty finding or affording fresh products, another contributory factor to poor diets. The problem can be compounded by unsanitary environments.[131] sanitation-related diseases cause decreased food intake, impaired nutrient absorption and direct nutrient losses through vomiting and diarrhoea, while parasitic infestations can absorb a significant percentage of a child's nutrient intake, as well as interfering with digestion and absorption. Data from 84 countries indicate that the best predictor of nutritional status, next to financial access to food, is the level of access to water.[132] Recent figures demonstrate that, even without disaggregating for income, urban children in low and middle income nations are between one and two standard deviations below the international median in terms of height for age.[133]

The difficulty of providing adequate care for children in poor households can be exacerbated in urban areas by the breakdown of family units and the frequent lack of social support. Many observers have pointed to the relatively high numbers of urban households headed by single mothers around the world as a factor explaining poor outcomes for children. There is no question that female-headed households are disproportionately poor, or that it takes more effort on the part of a single adult to provide high quality care for children. However, there is also evidence that women are more likely to invest their limited resources in children's well-being and long-term success, and that many children do better in female-headed households.[134]

Urban neighbourhoods

Many poor urban children live in rundown inner cities, peripheral squatter communities or barren suburbs where their social, cultural and recreational needs receive little attention. In four Johannesburg neighbourhoods, children described settings almost completely lacking in appealing possibilities. There were no recreational facilities, nor any safe places to play or see friends. Parks and empty lots were taken over by drunk, abusive adults and filled with refuse. Swimming pools were too far away and too expensive to use. Mobility was limited by heavy traffic, crumbling sidewalks and broken traffic lights. The bus service was patchy and unaffordable, and streets were so poorly lit that children were afraid to go out at night.[135] Aside from the lack of opportunity, children find the stigma of living in such rundown and marginal communities to be a serious issue. Far from taking their physical environments for granted, children are extremely sensitive to their surroundings, finding them a source of satisfaction but also a cause for humiliation and distress.

Neighbourhood quality, accessibility and opportunity for children and adolescents are determined to some degree by the level of formal municipal provision. But local community institutions like churches, cultural centres and recreational clubs also play a significant role, and they depend on the level of social organization and commitment within a community. Many African American churches in major cities of the US have taken initiatives to mobilize community members to plan and manage their own neighbourhoods, but research in the USA has also indicated that this kind of neighbourhood resource base tends to be weaker where there are high concentrations of poverty, joblessness and residential mobility.[136]

These same factors have also been related to higher levels of violence and insecurity.[137] In cities around the world community violence has become an increasingly commonplace part of children's experience. Exposure to violence has repeatedly been linked to higher rates of depression, anxiety, distress, aggression and behavioral disturbances for children and adolescents.[138] There seems to be little doubt, moreover, that poverty and the inadequate living conditions, insecurity and marginalisation experienced by many poor communities can feed frustration and aggresssion. In one high poverty neighbourhood in Chicago, 47 per cent of girls and 55 per cent of boys between 7 and 13 had reportedly seen someone being shot or stabbed, and over 20 per cent lived with someone who had been shot.[139] In Washington DC, 75 per cent of a sample of African American elementary school children had witnessed violence in their communities, ranging from physical assaults and gang violence to rape and homicide. Almost half their parents were unaware that they had been exposed to any violence.[140]

Children and adolescents may not only be victims of violence, but also contribute to it. Bullying by peers is a problem for many children, and vandalism, drug use and gang-related crime by young people are the cause of fear and concern in communities around the world. These activities may, in turn, bring children into contact with law enforcement officials. In certain cases where the juvenile justice system is weak or non-existent, children become subject to arbitrary treatment by the police or to other rights abuses. In part at least, phenomena such as vandalism can be related to boredom and the lack of opportunity and hope. In many communities the provision of recreational facilities, job training and options for constructive involvement have resulted in dramatic reductions in crime and gang violence.[141]

Schooling and work

Schooling, like most other basic services, tends to be more readily available to urban children than their rural counterparts. But school remains either inaccessible or unaffordable for many poor urban children. Moreover, the general quality of schools in poor urban areas can be extremely low, and this constitutes yet another disincentive for parents and children. Especially in illegal settlements, governments may overlook their obligation to provide education or, indeed, any other service. When the large Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Children project was developed for children in hazardous labour in Bangladesh, it was quickly discovered that more than half the children attending these small learning centres in slum areas were not 'working children', indicating that there was a more general problem with access to schooling.[142] But even when government schools are within walking distance, many urban children do not attend. Of those that do enrol, many drop out in the first few years. Door-to-door surveys in poor neighbourhoods in Hyderabad and Secunderabad indicate that the quality of schools and of teaching is a major factor. Overcrowded and rundown classrooms, disinterested teachers, physical punishment, social discrimination and humiliation are some of the reasons cited by parents and children for their lack of motivation over time.[143] In the case of particularly vulnerable groups, such as children with disabilities, the social and physical barriers to attending school in poor urban areas can be insurmountable without special support and provisions.

Many children are denied their right to education in order to undertake household or domestic chores, or to care for younger siblings. This is as true for rural areas as it is for urban ones, but the lack of public utilities and services in many poor urban communities contributes to inappropriate burdens for millions of children, especially girls.

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Other children may be withdrawn from school to contribute to household income. A survey in a Kolkata (Calcutta) 'slum' revealed that 84 per cent of school age children were not attending school, and that of these, 49 per cent were working outside the home – as rag pickers, domestic helpers, leather workers or battery breakers.[144] Child labour not only impacts upon educational opportunities, it can also take dangerous and degrading forms. There is probably no city in the world where there are not some children exposed to hazardous work, but the proportion of children in this position is particularly high in many low and middle income nations where, for instance, they make a living picking through waste[145] or working with dangerous machinery, heat, toxic chemicals and dust.[146] Domestic labour in the homes of others is especially prevalent in urban areas, often involving children sent from rural areas, and entailing long hours, little or no pay, little relief from isolation and, frequently, abusive treatment and sexual violence.[147]

An especially serious violation of children's rights is child prostitution, a phenomenon that is particularly associated with major cities with high levels of poverty. A recent estimate from UNICEF in India indicates that there are more than 100,000 child prostitutes in that country's five major cities.[148] In Mexico, a study of the cities of Acapulco, Cancún, Ciudad Juarez, Guadalajara, Tapachula and Tijuana estimated that a total of 4,600 children are sexually exploited in these cities, while some 16,000 are believed to be exploited at the national level.[149] This, in turn, exposes these children to violence, exploitation and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. The fact that in Thailand close to $300 million is estimated to be transferred annually from urban to rural areas by women working in the sex trade in urban areas helps to illustrate the direct link between poverty and prostitution in a rural-urban context.[150]

Children on the street

The phenomenon of children living on the street is a peculiarly urban one, although many of the children involved may originate from rural areas. The demands of work for some urban children push them onto city streets for many hours a day, and in some of these cases links with home can become tenuous. In other cases, work may be secondary, and children may have left home because of abuse, a desire for excitement or relief from oppressive home conditions. At night, these children become particularly vulnerable to all forms of abuse. During winter, cold can be a deadly enemy in Moscow, where there are estimated to be 50,000 homeless children, many sleep on air vents for the metro system to escape the freezing temperatures, or even risk disease in the city's sewers in order to find relative warmth.[151] A large proportion of children on the street engage in hazardous work – dodging traffic as they sell goods to passing motorists for instance. Many are involved in legitimate work, others choose or are pushed into illegal activity, engaging in petty crime and theft, working in the commercial sex or drug trade or becoming drawn into organized begging or rag-picking rackets. Whether or not they are breaking the law, these children are among the most stigmatised urban dwellers, constantly facing abuse from other citizens and harassment by the police. Often children are arrested for crimes or simply for vagrancy, and can be trapped for long months in the slow moving bureaucracy of the justice system, detained in conditions that violate their basic rights (Box 8).

TAKING ACTION

Addressing the problems outlined in earlier sections is a significant challenge, yet there are hundreds of precedents, many supported by UNICEF, that demonstrate how much can be achieved, even with limited resources, to promote local governance in favour of children's rights and to translate the commitments arising from the ratification of the CRC at the municipal level.[152] And there are compelling reasons why putting children first is in the interest of the entire urban population. First and foremost, children's healthy development and their active participation in society are crucial to the future of every city and urban settlement, indeed the state of children living in urban areas is an effective barometer of social progress. Second, children are particularly sensitive to the conditions in which they live and are especially vulnerable to the effects of poverty, poor housing, environmental pollution and exposure to violence, abuse and neglect. Third, failing children brings huge costs to societies – urban and rural alike. When children's growth and development are compromised, so too is their potential to evolve in their capacities and talents, to assume responsibilities and promote economic and social progress in the world's urban settlements.

Given both their potential and their vulnerability, government action (or lack of action) can have a significant impact upon children. At the local level, urban administrations and municipalities have an instrumental role to play in protecting children, ensuring their healthy development and providing constructive outlets for their energy and creativity. Given this, it is important that innovative strategies and mechanisms are developed and implemented to ensure a new political culture in which efforts made by communities and civil society are articulated through local government activities.[153] Where mechanisms for information exchange exist, these innovations can easily be shared with and, when relevant, replicated by other cities and communities.

But if local government initiatives are to be effective, action and support at the national level are crucial. National action to promote local governance for children's rights includes the ratification and implementation of the most relevant human rights conventions, especially the CRC, the development of a constitutional framework protective of human rights, the establishment of participatory democratic institutions that promote social inclusion for low income groups, the promotion of a process of decentralisation of responsibilites, the provision of adequate resources to enable effective action on the part of local government, and the presence of a strong and independent judiciary to ensure effective law enforcement. Together, these elements provide the political, economic and legal underpinnings for effective local actions and help constitute a framework for the good governance that is crucial to the realization of children's rights (Box 9).

Many significant steps towards establishing or furthering good urban governance have been taken in urban settlements around the world. This Digest looks in particular at initiatives to:

1. Promote the role of children in urban governance
2. Improve physical and social conditions for children and their families

Box 8: Street children and the law: a view from Human Rights Watch[154]

We didn't sleep at all last night. That's why we're sleeping now, during the day. Night is the most dangerous for us. The police come while we're sleeping and catch you off guard, and grab and hit you. They'll take you to Makadara court and then you'll be sent to remand [detention] for months. Last night there was a big roundup and we had to move so many times to avoid being caught. There was a large group of police in a big lorry, driving around, looking for kids.

Moses Mwangi, a street boy in Nairobi, Kenya

Street children throughout the world are subjected to routine harassment and physical abuse by police, government, and private security forces, out to wipe the streets clean of a perceived social blight. Street children face extortion, theft, severe beatings, mutilation, sexual abuse, and even death.

Children living on the street are charged with vague "offences" such as vagrancy or loitering, or status offences such as being "in need of protection or discipline," which effectively make children's poverty and homelessness, or status as children, a crime. They are often arbitrarily rounded up and detained simply because they are on the streets and appear to be homeless. Some street children are arrested and jailed because of their involvement in small businesses deemed to be illegal, such as unlicensed hawking, or are accused of petty theft, drug related crimes, or prostitution. Some are arrested as scapegoats, or in order to catch others. Many police believe street children have information about crimes committed on their beat, or attribute crimes in the area to street children directly, imputing criminal associations and criminal activities to street children generally.

For whatever the alleged crime, from vagrancy to theft, children who live on the street face frequent roundups. They are often held in jails for days and even weeks, under horrendous conditions, and usually mixed with adults. There they may be further beaten by police, or forced to pay bribes in order to be released. Girls may be coerced into providing sexual services to police in exchange for release, or are raped. From jails, street children may be transferred eventually to long-term penal institutions, sometimes euphemistically called 'homes' or 'schools' where they may languish, out of sight, for years. Few advocates, let alone lawyers or prosecutors, speak up for these children, and street children rarely have family members or other concerned adults able to intervene on their behalf. Family members are often not informed of their children's arrest and detention in the first place. Contrary to popular belief, many street children actually have family members and homes to which they might return periodically, and are not orphans.

Widespread impunity and the slowness of law enforcement bodies to investigate and prosecute cases of abuses against street children have allowed violence against these children to continue unchecked. Establishing police accountability is further hampered by the fact that street children often have no alternative but to complain directly to police about police abuses. The threat of police reprisals acts as a serious deterrent to any child coming forward to testify or make a complaint against an officer. After witnessing and experiencing acts of brutality inflicted by law enforcement, it is no surprise that street children place little faith in the system to bring their tormentors to justice.

Of course, these two sets of initiatives are not independent: facilitating and supporting children's participation is one of the best ways of focusing upon key physical and social interventions to improve urban living conditions.

Promoting the role of children

The Convention on the Rights of the Child offers urban authorities a framework within which to make real progress towards realising children's rights. On a practical level, and within an urban context, a commitment to the CRC can be translated through, among other things:

- the development of city-wide children's rights strategies, providing the framework for policy action, promoting the coordination of activities among relevant actors and identifying concrete goals and targets to promote and monitor progress and encourage the broad engagement of civil society;
- the establishment of local government structures that mainstream children's interests in local plans and policies;
- the incorporation of children's concerns, and particularly those of children belonging to the most vulnerable groups, in local budgets;
- the development of periodic 'state of the city's children' reports to review progress and advance the cause of children.

Promoting children's rights in an urban context challenges local governments to be flexible and to adapt their organizational structure to meet local needs,[155] and there are already many examples of cities in which this challenge is being met. In Croatia, for example, the Towns and Districts Friends of Children initiative launched in 1999 sees local authorities and civil society, children's institutions, parents and children working together to make their towns and districts more child friendly and to monitor achievements through a sophisticated set of indicators based on children's rights.[156] In Bolivia, 109 municipalities have adopted a common strategy that involves families directly and that aims at reducing child and maternal mortality, advocating for children's rights and increasing community participation.[157] In Ukraine, mayors from 35 cities, along with representatives of youth organisations and mass media met in 2000 in order to develop local plans of action and observe best practices in favour of children.[158]

Child participation in local governance

One of the key characteristics of good local governance for children is founded on the rights of children to express their views freely, and to seek, receive and impart information (articles 12 and 13 of the CRC). Participation is a process in which children and youth engage with other people around issues that concern their individual and collective life conditions. In this process, the child experiences him or herself as playing a useful role in the community. Participants interact in ways that respect each other's dignity, with the intention of achieving a shared goal. Formal processes of participation deliberately create structures for children's engagement in constructing meaning and sharing decision making.[159]

One of the longest-running examples of children's participation is the Growing Up in Cities project pioneered in the 1970s, which aims to understand the reasons why young people find their city a good place in which to grow up, or a place where they feel alienated and disconnected. With support from UNESCO's MOST Programme (Management of Social Transformations), the project has recently completed an in-depth study of children's participation in eight cities around the world.[160] Many other projects now recognise the value of involving children. For example, concern over the living conditions in Harare's informal settlements promted Save the Children (UK) and a local partner organization (Inter Country People's Aid) to carry out a situa-

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Box 9: Elements of good local governance for children

The development of robust, effective democratic processes, including accountability to citizens; transparency in the generation, allocation and use of resources; and the participation of communities in the decision-making processes that affect them.

The promotion of respect for the rule of law on the basis of a normative framework which consistently promotes and protects the rights of all children.

The promotion of social inclusion in public policies, including policies related to child care, education and health, water and sanitation, and the establishment of standards, supervision and prices for such services where they are provided by private companies or NGOs.

Adherence to environmental regulations and occupational health and safety standards on the part of local enterprises, in harmony with relevant international standards on access to employment and working conditions for children.

tion analysis in two of these settlements in 1998. While the results were useful, the researchers involved realised that the findings had failed to reflect the reality for children, and local children themselves complained that their voices had been marginalised and that adults who had spoken on their behalf were often poorly informed about their real situation, perceptions and wishes. Save the Children responded by devising a more extensive and participatory project, where the researchers were children themselves from informal settlements. The results of this research have subsequently been used to help create a network of organisations working in informal settlements, to develop programmes of assistance based on the problems identified by the children and to raise the profile of the communities involved among various levels of government and the general public. Moreover, the experience brought to the children involved an increased sense of confidence and self-esteem.[161]

Recognising the right of children to participate and express their views in all matters affecting them, many city governments have now begun to involve children and youth in discussions of their priorities. Brazil provides an interesting example in this regard: in the city of Barra Mansa child counsellors elected by their peers not only monitor the policies and resource allocations of the city government, but also determine priorities for spending part of the city's investment funds (Box 10). In Ecuador, several city authorities have involved children in defining criteria for assessing the city. In 15 communities in the capital, Quito, children's brigades, supported by trained youth leaders, identified what they regarded as the most pressing problems and promoted action to address these.[162] In Albania, UNICEF is supporting a Youth Parliament Project that aims to promote youth participation in public debates. Representative assemblies for children between 14 and 18 years were established in six of the country's prefectures. Two hundred democratically elected young parliamentarians prepare youth action agendas, learn about civic affairs through partnership with municipal and national officials, present plans of action to municipal government and conduct peer-to-peer education programmes. The programme is currently being extended to reach all 12 of Albania's prefectures.[163] In Ukraine there is a Children's Parliamentarian Movement in 15 cities.[164]

The Child Friendly Cities movement

The potential for action by urban governments on children's rights and for children to participate in and contribute to the decisions that effect their life has led to the development of the Child Friendly Cities movement (Box 11).[165] While there is no single definition of a Child Friendly City, the unifying principle is that a city is considered friendly when it is able to assure the rights of its children. A Child Friendly City legislates and enforces ordinances consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and gives priority to children, especially in the provision of basic services and the allocation of resources. The goal of the initiative is to reach all urban children, not least those who are poor and excluded, and to promote new ways of doing this, including the participation of children. To achieve this, the Child Friendly City initiative encourages national governments and supports urban authorities to provide the necessary legal policy and institutional framework.

The Child-Friendly concept has taken root in urban areas around the world. In Malaysia, for example, a Charter on Making Urban Areas Child-Friendly was developed after a national conference on children's rights: its 'ten strategic actions' are aimed specifically at urban local authorities.[166] This has been complemented by a child friendly survey instrument that involves the participation of children in assessing their own urban environments and the compilation of a book on action-oriented activities.

Box 10: Barra Mansa's child development councils[167]

Brazil's participatory budgeting – a process by which citizens become involved in establishing the spending priorities of local government for their district – is a well-known example of democracy in action. The city of Barra Mansa has taken this one step further by establishing a Children's Participatory Budgeting Council which consists of 18 boys and 18 girls, elected by their peers to ensure that children's priorities are addressed by the municipality. This is more than a token gesture: one of the group's responsibilities is direct control over the allocation of part of the municipal budget, amounting to approximately US$ 125,000 a year.

The children's council process begins at neighbourhood level with annual assemblies at which all children between the ages of 9 and 15 are eligible to vote. Children debate local issues and elect their delegates, who, in turn, attend district assemblies to elect the child council members. Each year since 1998 over 6000 children have joined in to discuss their priorities and elect their representatives.

The projects carried out under the direction of the council have included repairs to schools, tree planting, repairs to drains and sewers, improved playgrounds and better security in low-income areas. At one municipal school, a new all-weather sports surface was installed; in another neighbourhood, lighting was put into a tunnel where children often play in the evenings. One of the projects the council was most pleased with was the renovation of a health centre to include a modern dentist's surgery.

Aside from the tangible benefits to neighbourhoods, there are significant benefits to the young counsellors. Through visits to neighbourhoods around the city, they have learned about social and economic realities outside their home communities, and have gained experience in weighing problems and identifying solutions. While representing their own constituents, they have had to recognize the need to prioritize based on available resources. They have learnt how to develop projects and see them through the complex, slow political and bureaucratic processes of city government. Their commitment and seriousness of purpose have demonstrated the practical value of children's involvement in areas traditionally associated with adults and professionals. The greatest benefits are to the city itself. Growing awareness among local children of the practical meaning of citizenship, and the growing capacity of a core of experienced young citizens, are significant assets in the development of participatory democracy.

In the Dominican Republic, an initiative was started in 2000 to develop Child Friendly Municipalities, with the aim of strengthening the planning and administrative capacity of these political units. The initiative started with seven pilot municipalities, but after only 18 months, 35 of the country's 118 municipal councils were taking part. Achievements have included the establishment of three training centres for facilitators who will in turn lead training activities for child friendly local governance at the municipal level. Training packages have also been developed for candidates for municipal public office, and training manuals and a regular journal are produced to reinforce training content. These efforts have been supported by the national authority which is committed to decentralizing responsibilities and budgets and to taking on new tasks within a child rights perspective.

In Italy, guidance and support for the numerous Child Friendly City initiatives is provided by the Ministry for the Environment. Under the title of 'Sustainable Cities for Children', this programme encourages local governments to adopt a special code, including the collection of indicators that monitor the city's quality of life from children's perspectives.[168] Innovations implemented by different local authorities are shared in yearly fora, with prizes presented to the cities judged to have performed best. Initiatives have included community and child participation in urban planning, an emphasis on quality and accessibility to public spaces for play and socialization, child-centred urban planning and management methods and making services (including hospitals and schools) child-friendly. By 2001, 182 cities had joined the movement, supported by many academic institutions, NGOs, the media and children's organizations.

In South Africa, the city of Johannesburg is the first major urban centre to make a commitment to implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the local level. The Johannesburg initiative will be used as a pilot project for this process, which will unfold throughout the country between 2002 and 2006.

Enhancing data collection

In addition to structures that promote children's participation, effective action for and with children relies on the availability of current and accurate data. Governments and agencies, whether at the local, national or international level, cannot address the needs of deprived or excluded children if they lack information on who these children are, where they live and in what conditions. Interesting initiatives in this area include the establishment of a local information system (*Sistema de Información Local*) for monitoring children's rights in Ecuador. This system produces information on demography, employment, family income, migration, health, nutrition, breastfeeding, education, child development and water and sanitation. The data are gathered through the active participation of the National Census and Statistics Institute with support from local communities. Dhaka City Corporation uses a geographic information system to map urban basic service delivery, and in Moscow, the City Government has given its support to the establishment of a city database on street children, who had previously been invisible in urban statistics.[170]

Other new and relevant approaches for understanding urban conditions include city-wide mapping of housing conditions and health outcomes,[171] and accurate, detailed 'slum' and 'shack' censuses undertaken by organizations of the urban poor (these provide not only detailed information, but also a powerful tool with which low-income groups can negotiate with local agencies).[172] There are also many examples of neighbourhood or district maps developed by and with children that have provided local governments and other local agencies with the means to address children's needs and promote respect for their rights.[173]

An example that successfully demonstrates how the elements discussed in this section can be combined to ensure that children are put first in urban governance is provided by the experience in Ceará State in Brazil, discussed in Box 12. Here we find national and regional structures devolving power to local authorities, cross-sectoral

Box 11: The Child Friendly Movement in the Philippines

The Government of the Philippines, together with UNICEF, produced a Country Programme for Children for 1999-2003 that transforms the Convention on the Rights of the Child from policy to action through a well-defined national Child Friendly Movement.[169] This goal-oriented programme includes the establishment and monitoring of child friendly schools, health facilities, media, workplaces, religious communities, *barangays* (neighbourhoods), cities and provinces. The Child Friendly Movement employs a strategic framework that places the child at the centre of a range of institutions, beginning with the family and culminating in the regional and national levels.

Family: the country programme seeks to promote effective and responsible parenting skills, better caring practices, and protective behaviour through parent education, female functional literacy, and media education. A complementary strategy seeks to ensure a more secure livelihood and facilitate access to credit and employment opportunities for adult family members with the aim of reducing their dependence on child labour.

Community: the community is a valuable source of support to families. In the community, there are two prerequisites for reinforcing family level interventions: (1) viable and convergent service delivery systems that address the needs of the family and are suited to the particular requirements of the community; (2) mechanisms and processes that strengthen convergence, ensure sustainability, and facilitate the expansion of tested interventions. Also essential are community-based institutions or coordinating mechanisms to galvanize the commitment and participation of community stakeholders.

Cities and provinces: in cities, provinces, and regions, strategies include political mobilization, capacity building for local government units, resource mobilization and investment allocation, and strengthening of the allocation system. The major concern at this level is to integrate community-focused interventions with province- and city-wide support activities. This integration is crucial for the replication of models at the provincial level.

Regional and national levels: at these levels, programme interventions aim to create an enabling environment and generate political will to mobilize the entire nation around the Child Friendly Movement. Strategies include advocacy for policy formulation and implementation; resource allocation for children; development and management of communication resources for legal and policy advocacy; media advocacy and mobilization for awareness raising, knowledge-building discussion, and action on children's rights issues; and strengthening of regional institutions for children.

Specifically, the achievement of child friendly *barangays* and cities involves assuring the rights of children to health and nutrition (immunization and vitamin distribution); education (accessible school systems); protection (violence-free communities); and participation (venues that involve children and youth). City-based actions highlight the strategic leadership roles of city mayors, the empowering roles of families and communities in promoting and protecting children's rights, and partnership and alliance building for children. Effective and meaningful programmes to safeguard children's rights start with a population that understands these rights, and supports and participates in their promotion. One effective way of achieving this is through child advocates, whose role in projecting the voices and images of children has become one of the defining modes for advancing the Child Friendly Movement in the Philippines.

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and inter-authority cooperation, innovative legislative change in favour of children, democratic structures for community participation, community-based data collection and evaluation of local indicators, and effective support from international organizations. Together these elements enable real progress to be made in promoting children's rights at the local level.

Improving physical and social conditions

Safer, healthier, more secure housing and neighbourhoods are key to meeting children's rights such as those to education, health care, protection and an adequate standard of living. Perhaps the most significant innovation of the last 30 to 40 years has been the acceptance by most governments of the need for upgrading initiatives to improve housing and ensure basic infrastructure and services in illegal or informal settlements or slums. Most upgrading programmes include improved provision for piped water, sanitation, drainage, roads and paths; some include schools, health care facilities and day-care centres. Some programmes also provide support to households to improve the quality of their homes and for micro-enterprises. Although success has been varied, these programmes are underpinned by two critical principles. The first is that the inhabitants have the right to infrastructure and services even if they live in illegal or informal settlements. The second is that the slums or squatter settlements have value. Before upgrading programmes became common, official housing policies usually viewed these settlements simply as targets for demolition, and the populations were displaced. It has increasingly come to be understood that recognizing title and security of tenure enhances both the economic prospects of the poor, and benefits the national economy.

The key issue now is to shift support from 'one-off' projects to continuous upgrading programmes within all relevant sectors of local government.[175] Scaling-up to city-wide or national upgrading programmes can be difficult to achieve because of obstacles presented by land regulations, ownership issues, changes in zoning, and the policies and institutions that govern the provision of housing and infrastructure. This is compounded by the difficulty for slum-dwellers of finding a voice at the national level. Nonetheless, with vigorous leadership, strengthened institutions with clear policies and roles, the commitment of central government and the will to enable slum residents to participate fully in the process, real progress can be made. Jordan, Tunisia and Indonesia have all successfully implemented nationwide upgrading programmes, while programmes of significant scale are underway in Ghana, Venezuela, Brazil, India, Mauritania, Morocco and the Philippines.[176]

Upgrading programmes need to be complemented with measures to give low-income households greater capacity to build or obtain better quality housing or to participate in similar neighbourhood based initiatives. Many of the most innovative, successful, cost-effective solutions have been developed by federations of the urban poor working with local governments – for instance in South Africa and India.[177] There are also examples of eviction programmes that have become relocation programmes, managing to free up sites needed for public works, but at the same time working closely with inhabitants to meet their needs and priorities.[178]

In the Philippines, the new President who came to office in 2001, with broad support from the urban poor, made an important contribution to the reduction of evictions and demolitions in Manila. In addition to a rural land reform programme whereby private land is bought and resold to the rural poor, 103,000 families benefited in 2001 from the proclamation of government land in favour of poor urban residents. The proclamations give security of

Box 12: Local Government and the CRC: 'Approved Municipalities' in the State of Ceará, Brazil[174]

In 1990, Brazil introduced the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (SCA), an advanced piece of legislation that explicitly incorporates the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The SCA provides a structure for local authorities to establish mechanisms for community participation, notably two representative municipal fora – the Municipal Council of Child and Adolescent Rights and the Guardianship Council – to manage and monitor child and adolescent related policies. The former is a forum in which both governmental and non-governmental bodies meet to define and monitor child- and adolescent-centred public policies. The Guardianship Council is an executive body that ensures the implementation of children's rights.

The State of Ceará, in northeastern Brazil made the SCA a key element in its governance structure. In 1998, with the aim of building on this innovation, UNICEF introduced the concept of the "UNICEF Seal – Approved Municipality", which is supported by a number of important partners, including the Ceará section of the National Union of Municipal Education Leaders, the Mayor's Association of Ceará and the State government. The Seal is awarded to municipal councils that have enhanced their performance and administration in favour of policies for children, with special emphasis on goals relating to education, health and child protection. These goals are assessed using indicators collected by trained members of the community. The award is intended to encourage local authorities to develop still further their obligations to children under the law, to strive for intersectoriality in the main areas of activity, and to recognize the benefits of community-based analysis, implementation and evaluation. To obtain the Seal, municipalities must also promote collaboration with other local authorities, engage in training of the public administration in children's rights, contribute to public awareness raising on such policies and strengthen the participatory mechanisms laid down in the SCA.

The Certificate programme is already having positive results. In the first phase of the project (1998-2000) 172 of Ceará's 184 municipal councils participated in the initiative, 129 requested an evaluation visit, and 26 were awarded the Seal in an ceremony that attracted considerable media attention. In the second phase (2000-2002) the number of participating councils rose to 180. The project has clearly demonstrated how local governments can collaborate to increase primary school enrolment, reduce infant mortality and create effective child rights councils. Indeed, in the first two years of the initiative, 59 new Guardianship Councils and 13 new Councils of Child and Adolescent Rights were created in Ceará and the neighbouring state of Rio Grande do Norte. In addition, a Forum of Councils was created as a mechanism for counsellors to exchange experiences. The initiative is also encouraging a change in the profile of public administration, as public officials, including mayors, become more sensitive and responsive to the rights and wellbeing of children under their jurisdiction. It also promotes the use of social indicators to assess child welfare in urban areas and evaluate the performance of municipal governments. The quality of these indicators is widely recognized: they are used by agencies, analysts and researchers and are reproduced in Ceará's Statistical Yearbook. In 2001, new indicators in early childhood care and development, education, mobilisation and communication were introduced, and a number of other states have now expressed interest in the initiative.

Communication is a key dimension of the project. For example, citizens not only attend, but also publicise discussion meetings that are held in the town halls. Information is disseminated by radio stations, government employees, association leaders and counsellors from the Guardianship and Rights Councils. State and regional newspapers, posters and billboards are also used to advertise the Seal and related information. In addition, there is a widely distributed newsletter that informs readers of progress and events in each municipality. Significantly, this newsletter is produced in a colourful, accessible, child friendly format.

tenure and the promise of future development and titles. Moreover, distant relocation has been stopped in favour of on-site upgrading. These important policy shifts stem in large part from the pressure successfully exerted on government over a period of many months by people's organizations and NGOs. These are grounds for optimism, but real and lasting change requires legislative revision, the sensitization of the private sector, and a commitment by all levels and branches of the government to recognize housing as a fundamental right for all.

While all these projects require an economic commitment, unit costs depend not only on the level of provision, but on how it is undertaken: many schemes have greatly improved provision in urban areas with low unit costs – and in some cases most or all of the costs were equitably recovered from user fees, despite the poverty of the groups involved.[179] These schemes were undertaken autonomously by low income households and local non-profit agencies or by partnerships between low income groups and local providers (usually local governments). A range of municipal and community initiatives has also demonstrated cost-effective measures to improve provision for health care, child care, water and sanitation and solid-waste collection.[180] There are cities in Latin America and Asia that now have close to universal provision of piped water, good quality household sanitation, drainage and house-to-house garbage collection.[181] All of these programmes have contributed to better environments for children. Some have had specific child-components, such as the provision made for children's toilets and washing facilities in the public toilets developed by community organizations in Mumbai,[182] and the support for community-based child care in Guatemala City.[183]

In a number of communities worldwide, coalitions of residents, police and local government agencies have been effective in reducing violence and improving the quality of life for local children (Box 13). The fact that not all poor neighbourhoods experience violence is something we can learn from. Research has indicated that where residents are able to exert control or show "collective efficacy", violence is less likely to occur.[184] Both residential stability and social ties among residents strengthen the level of collective efficacy. Security of tenure and cost-effective housing solutions are proven approaches to promoting stability; and opportunities for constructive involvement in community improvement are concrete ways of demonstrating group efficacy and stimulating social ties.

Access to nature, far from being a luxury for urban children, should be considered an essential component of the human environment, necessary for mental health in the same way that clean water and sanitation are critical for physical health. Indeed, a growing body of research suggests that exposure to nature reduces stress and mental fatigue and provides a respite from the demands imposed by urban living.[185] Numerous studies and observations from all over the world note the marked preference and desire of children, and in particular poor urban children, for natural environments. Some governments recognize the importance of green space in the city: in Romania, for example, the National Strategy for 2000-2004 includes objectives to increase planning in urban areas, with special emphasis on extending green areas and parks.[187]

Many constructive local initiatives have focused specifically on improving the quality of public space for children. The research on Growing Up in Cities, mentioned earlier, has shown the importance to children and adolescents of a variety of safe spaces where they can meet and play. For example, the Growing Up in Cities project for Lebanon was initiated in 1999 in the historic city of Saida in collaboration with the city council and the Hariri Foundation. In participatory research, children drew particular attention to the lack of green spaces in the old city and emphasized the importance of flowers and trees for the urban environment.[188]

Box 14 outlines an initiative in the Dominican Republic to develop parks with children, a response to the fact that, while adults may be well qualified to create environments that protect health and safety, children and youth know best what fosters or fractures their personal sense of well-being.[189] However, not all efforts to secure green space for children involve this level of partnership with local government. For instance, Kamakunji Park, located in a high density, low income area of Nairobi, was saved from development when the local community moved in and claimed it as public land. The children of the community can now continue to use the park for informal play, and the Green Belt Movement, an NGO that focuses on environmental conservation and community development, has established a tree nursery there.[190]

The provision of green spaces in urban areas is closely linked to the possibilities children have to realize their fundamental right to play. Indeed, along with the absence of greenery, the lack of play spaces was a key issue identified by the children participating in Saida's Growing Up in Cities project. They noted that parents discouraged them from playing in the streets and alleys of the town, but pointed out that the only playground in the historic centre was in poor repair. Their comments also drew attention to the concerns of women and girls over using public play areas. Projects such as this form the foundation of effective participatory planning for the establishment of green spaces and play areas.[191]

Acting on children's right to play and to

Box 13: Combating violence by improving the neighbourhood in Montreal[186]

In 1990, in the neighbourhood of Little Burgundy, Montreal (population 40,000), an escalating drug trade and a high crime rate – including many violent crimes – had undermined the social fabric and created insecurity among residents. Neighbourhood groups mobilized the police, municipal departments and citizens to assess the situation and identify solutions. Specific measures taken by this coalition included:

- Upgrading the quality and safety of public transportation; improving library services; improving street lighting; removing high fences to encourage police and citizen surveillance; and lobbying for a new sports complex to offer local youth recreational activities.
- Organizing an Environment Week to encourage citizens to improve overall conditions; creating a local newsletter; promoting greater resident participation in the annual public festival; and ensuring that the media focused attention on the revitalized quality of life in Little Burgundy rather than the outdated negative stereotypes.
- Social development initiatives including the assistance of a social worker for families with drug problems; encouraging economic investment, development, and job creation (e.g. favouring the employment of local people to run the new sports complex); and promoting cultural tolerance.

Over a three year period, there was a 46 per cent reduction in reported crimes and a 45 per cent drop in reported violent crimes. Residents began to make greater use of streets at night, and parents no longer felt the need to escort their children to school. Partners in this effort included Montreal's housing authority, various municipal departments, the police service, neighbourhood organizations and residents. Funding was provided by various departments of the City of Montreal, departments of the government of Quebec, and advertising revenue generated from the local newsletter.

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Box 14: Working with children to create safe play space[192]

There are few safe green open spaces in the Dominican Republic's urban areas. Lacking space for play, many children spend their free time in places where gambling occurs or where drugs and alcohol are sold and consumed. For some children the lack of safe appropriate space means isolation in their homes watching television without adequate supervision.

In response to this, 14 Child Friendly Cities are currently working with UNICEF to create parks that can be places for play and relaxation for children and their families, free of danger and threats to health. These parks, each to be designed with the participation of young people, will also be places where children can enjoy age-appropriate educational, artistic and cultural activities. The municipality will provide the land (to include a large green area) and will undertake reforestation efforts. With UNICEF's support, a team of architects, working in consultation with children and adolescents, will develop plans for the parks, and young people in each city will be trained in children's theatre and animation. The municipalities, for their part, will take on the costs of construction and equipment. When the parks are functioning, municipalities will organize recreational activities, provide maintenance and repairs and, in consultation with children, work to ensure their optimal use.

have access to the life of their communities has implications for all kinds of local planning and public works investments. A project by the Swedish section of the International Association for the Child's Right to Play (IPA) has created a network of 20 municipalities in Sweden to concentrate on the environments, such as playgrounds, where children spend the majority of their time outdoors. The project promotes the perspective of safe, creative play in every aspect of the city and its administration.[193] Most of the interventions described so far affect urban children in general. Also critical are more targeted interventions for children and families who are excluded from or inadequately served by conventional programmes: children facing discrimination, including immigrants, children with disabilities and girls, and children who do not go to school, including street children. In the Anhui province of China, for instance, a pilot project has explored ways to link Street Children Protection Centres with local communities.[194] Other examples of effective approaches to support and protection include safety nets for families who fall ill or lose income sources, and alternative approaches to education for those who remain unreached. Many of these themes, including the promotion of the rights of the most marginalized children and a commitment to education for all, are exemplified by the Kolkata City-Level Programme of Action discussed in Box 15.[195]

In urban areas especially, an important intervention is developmentally supportive care for young children whose caregivers may work away from home for long hours each day, and who are at serious risk of neglect. There is an obvious need in many poor urban communities, in both high and low income countries, for better quality provision of childcare because of the critical importance for household income of women's paid work. There are many examples of innovations. Eastside Community Investments (ECI) in Indianapolis, USA, for instance, is an organization that works to improve the quality of life through programmes that improve housing and create jobs. As in many other neighbourhoods across the country, women in Eastside earn income through providing informal childcare in their homes but these homes are usually poorly equipped and the women earn inadequate incomes since they are untrained and unlicensed. ECI formed a cooperative to provide childcare training and housing assistance, thereby simultaneously improving the quality of childcare,

Box 15: Action for street and working children in Kolkata

The City of Kolkata's City-Level Programme of Action for Street and Working Children (CLPOA) coordinates a variety of efforts in India's second most populous city with the aim of promoting child-rights oriented policies. CLPOA brings together governmental and non-governmental agencies committed to extending basic services and protection measures to all deprived urban children, including child workers, street children, rag-pickers, trafficked children, and child sex workers and children of sex workers. The partnership structure allows for a city-wide holistic approach that goes beyond project-based, ad-hoc initiatives. Yearly city-level and zone-level workplans are developed jointly to identify activities for implementation and provide a framework for area-based monitoring.

One particularly innovative action has been the Child Friendly Police initiative, whereby the Kolkata Police adopted a Child Protection Card, which can be issued to any child, but is of particular use to children with inadequate family support who live on the streets, in stations or in markets. Since 1998, CLPOA has coordinated with Kolkata Police in conducting training courses for police officers with the aim of sensitising them to the rights of deprived children and juvenile offenders, and of establishing stronger links with social welfare and protection services. The police also provide self-defence training to children at risk and host health service delivery in their stations every Sunday morning. As many as 42 police stations in the city are now involved in activities to protect children at risk.

Another ambitious project is the Shikshalaya Prakalpa Programme to enrol all children of school-going age in Kolkata in regular schools. This programme has designed a strategy to transform the entire education system of the city, and a wide-ranging partnership has been established involving the major stakeholders in the areas of education, child protection and urban governance. Significantly, the national government has also participated in this city-level initiative, not only providing the main part of the budget, but also becoming actively involved in the formulation and implementation of the programme. CLPOA's role in the initiative is to mobilize communities, assess local needs, set up and manage community-level education centres and follow up with families to prevent drop-out. It has overseen a city-wide survey of all 141 of Kolkata's wards to identify every child who is out of school – not just those in low-income areas, but also child domestic workers in more affluent parts of the city. The number of children out of primary school was found to be as high as 44,646 (that is, some 9 per cent of all children between the ages of five and nine).

The survey has also assessed the school facilities available in the city and mapped them against need. On this basis, 7500 preparation courses for formal school enrolment will be provided, with 25,000 more children enrolling directly into existing primary schools. The formal system has rationalised the location of its schools to bring the service closer to children, and teachers have been deployed on the basis of the needs assessment. In order to supplement the formal system 700 NGO-managed primary education centres will be created. These centres will be run by young people identified in the community and trained as 'bare-foot' teachers by a private academic institution with a reputation for academic excellence. Monitoring is to be ensured by six observers and six academic advisers, while ten resource centres provide academic support and supervision. Education materials have been developed in Urdu, Bengali and Hindi and printed using a low-cost technique.

This innovative programme could serve as an excellent model for other municipalities willing to carry out city-wide mobilization to reach all out of school children.[196]

boosting members' incomes and addressing their housing needs.[197]

In many cases, child care centres can become the focus for a range of essential services for poor families, a childcare centre which included health care was the catalyst for, and one of the central features of, a community-based upgrading programme in barrio San Jorge, a squatter settlement in Buenos Aires.[198] In Albania, the settlement of Bathore, on the outskirts of Tirana, is home to over 60,000 economic migrants from the northern part of the country. Glaring disparities exist between service provision in Bathore and the rest of Tirana, including facilities for early childhood care and development. Through the Gardens of Children project, which is managed by the Christian Children's Fund in partnership with UNICEF, members of the local community decided that 20 householders in different parts of Bathore would host small crèches where under fives would have access to play materials, early learning and other activities. These centres additionally provide mothers access to information on good parenting, maternal health and even vocational training.[199]

In India, a mobile childcare initiative is run by the Mobile Crèche organization to meet the needs of mothers working on construction sites in the cities of Delhi, Mumbai and Pune. The organization has established a programme of crèche facilities that accompany families as they move from one site to the next. On each site, temporary structures are erected to house the crèche, or use is made of existing buildings. In 2000-2001, the Mobile Crèche organization ran as many as 67 centres, of which 55 operated in construction sites, while the remainder had permanent locations in urban slums and resettlement colonies.[200] Box 16 describes another interesting initiative: an NGO partnership with private enterprise to provide care for the children of Dhaka's garment workers, as well as health care, social services, family planning and savings groups for their mothers.

Another important component in any intervention for excluded groups of children or adolescents is finding ways to address the discrimination they face, and helping them to avoid the sense of stigma and humiliation that so often accompanies their exclusion. The project described in Box 17 managed to change public attitudes towards working children while also providing them with a source of livelihood.

Box 16: Childcare for garment workers in Dhaka[201]

Most of Bangladesh's cities have been expanding rapidly, largely due to in-migration from poor, rural areas. Altogether, more than 20 million poor people live in Bangladesh's cities. Typically all members of a migrant family must work in order to survive. Women, who have traditionally been able to care for their children, now work in garment factories or as maid servants or brick breakers and face great difficulty in finding childcare services while they work. Young children are often cared for by an older sister who sacrifices her schooling to be available. In some situations, young children are left on their own, locked in their homes for the day or free to roam the streets.

Bangladesh's Factory Act of 1965 requires any workplace with 50 or more women employees to provide daycare facilities. But the government has failed to ensure implementation and most enterprises choose to ignore this requirement. Since 1991, an NGO called Phulki (spark) has been setting up workplace-based childcare centres in factories and offices where the business owner provides the space, startup costs, and caretaker salaries. The mothers supply the food and pay Phulki to manage the centre. Phulki manages the centre for a period of six to twelve months, after which the factory can take over, while Phulki provides management training. If the factory opts not to take over the daycare, Phulki continues its service for a fee.

At first, factory owners thought the centres would be an unnecessary burden, especially because no factories were built to accommodate such a facility. However, factories that have established daycare centres have found many benefits: workers who take maternity leave return to work sooner, there is less absenteeism, and production is more efficient. Some owners who assumed management of their daycare centres now provide other services – such as cooking facilities, workplace-based social services, medical programmes, family planning, non-formal education for children of workers, and savings programs. Phulki has been lobbying garment buying houses to include childcare in their compliance requirements for factories

Typically, there are 10 to 20 children at a daycare centre, and one caretaker for every five to seven children. Caretakers are recruited locally so that they are familiar to the children. Because some of them live with their own families next to the daycare centres, they can work beyond normal hours, including late at night or early in the morning, when the mothers may be working overtime. Some caretakers may eventually start home-based centres as businesses of their own. Mothers generally spend their breaks with their children, and those who are breastfeeding can continue to do so through the work day. Most mothers say the centres allow them to work more efficiently, for longer hours, and thus they can earn more so are better able to provide for their families, and can meet their basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, health and education without having to worry about neglecting their children. Although mothers are primarily involved in these centres, fathers are also encouraged to play a role, and often attend monthly meetings in place of their wives.

Box 17: Opportunities for poor adolescents in Cordoba[202]

In the city of Cordoba, Argentina, the production and sale of a monthly magazine, *La Luciérnaga*, generates a regular income for poor adolescents and provides an alternative to begging and other risky sources of livelihood on the streets. The publication also serves as a source of information on the realities faced by child and youth workers, and has contributed to growing awareness among the city's residents, and a sense of solidarity with these young citizens. Before this project began, children working on the street had a very negative image. Repressed by the police, they were driven to marginal and often illegal options for survival, and were associated in the public mind with drug use, violence and petty crime.

La Luciérnaga, which publishes photos, essays, interviews, poetry and cartoons, began as a volunteer project of Utopia, a community-based organization, in 1995. By 1999 the magazine had a professional staff, its own print shop and a regular readership of over 50,000. The young people participating in the project buy the magazine at US$0.25, which covers all production and administrative costs, and sell it on the street for US$1.00. This generates a reasonable income for the 110 working children involved, and also allows time for school or vocational training.

Of the 60 young people who have been long-term participants, 50 admitted to having broken the law before the project began. Between 1997 and 1999, only two of them were involved in misdemeanours – in stark contrast to the 80 per cent of young people who were estimated to have re-offended under the provincial juvenile justice system. There have also been significant changes in their public image. The sale of the magazine has given them the opportunity for positive interaction with local residents.

There have also been changes at the official level. In 1997, local government recognized the value of this effort and, along with provincial government, started to provide concrete support for various projects designed and coordinated by the *La Luciérnaga* group, including the creation of a non-formal school, a workshop for training young educators, the organization of recreational activities, assistance to minors in the juvenile justice system and a support programme for marginalized mothers and children.

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It is significant that so many of the most effective interactions for poor urban children address problems on a number of fronts at once – allowing children to become effective citizens, and at the same time improving neighbourhood space; providing childcare along with access to a wide range of other services; responding to violence by enhancing local facilities and improving transportation; and creating jobs while tackling discrimination. These responses all make use of the natural synergies that can be so powerful in urban areas, managing in the process to make space for what is best in urban life by tackling what is worst.

Much of the innovation also takes place when there is an official recognition that many of the investments and services of government, as well as those contracted out to private companies or NGOs, are important for children's health and development. The challenge is to ensure that these agencies understand the particular requirements of children and recognize their rights to protection and development. This also means going beyond an understanding of children as passive recipients and recognizing their right to participation. International development assistance agencies also have an important role to play, although several of these agencies have been slow to build their knowledge and to develop their capacities to respond to the rights of urban children (Box 18).

Box 19: Key elements for a child-friendly city[204]

In every region of the world, a city that respects children's rights is a city that requires:

- Good access for all children to affordable, quality basic health and education services, clean water, adequate sanitation and solid waste removal;
- Local authorities to ensure that policies, resource allocation and all initiatives and actions emerging from governance structures are made in a manner that is in the best interests of the children in their constituencies;
- Safe environments and conditions that nurture the development of children of all ages with opportunities for recreation, learning, social interaction, psychosocial development and cultural expression;
- A sustainable future under equitable social and economic conditions, and protection from the effects of environmental hazards and natural disasters;
- That children have the right to participate in making decisions that affect their lives and are offered opportunities to express their opinions;
- That special attention is given to disadvantaged children, such as those who are living or working on the streets, sexually exploited, living with disabilities or without adequate family support;
- Non-discrimination based on gender, ethnic background or social or economic status.

Conclusion

The issue of poverty and exclusion in the world's towns and cities is not about promoting the interest of urban children at the expense of their rural counterparts. Rather, it is a question of how best to address and promote children's rights, wherever they live. The rights of many of the world's billion urban children are contravened every day. Acting on this requires both urban expertise and expertise on children – knowledge about the particular ways that urban areas threaten children's wellbeing, and also about the ways that urban households, communities and governments can respond most effectively. This means having access to detailed, disaggregated information rooted in local contexts, including information that draws on local children's knowledge and experience. A number of the goals that contribute to making urban centres responsive to the rights of children are summarised in Box 19.

The diseases that underlie so much child deprivation and premature death in urban areas are sometimes called the diseases of poverty. A more accurate term would be the diseases of poor, unaccountable, undemocratic urban governance. This Digest has therefore focussed largely, though not exclusively, on the potential of good governance to promote equity and ensure children's rights, most especially within the context of the Child Friendly Cities movement. The achievement of this goal requires substantial, long-term support from international agencies, a commitment, both legislative and fiscal, on the part of national and regional government, and city level action that involves wide-ranging strategic partnerships that bring together local government, mayors, health and education authorities and institutions, community organizations and structures, citizens' movements and the private sector. Finally, real progress can only be guaranteed by giving full scope and expression to the ingenuity, insight and potential of the families and children who make up urban communities around the world.

Box 18: The role of international agencies in urban areas

Many of the largest international agencies have little in-house expertise on children, despite the fact that children generally make up 40 to 50 per cent of the population their projects and programmes are meant to serve. This lack of expertise may explain why few of these agencies give high priority to the investments and services that matter most for children in urban areas, including programmes to support safer, more secure homes for low-income groups.[203] Clearly, the investments and services that are most critical to children need a greater priority from international agencies, both in rural and urban areas. Investments and services in urban areas must also make best use of the economies of scale and proximity that urban areas offer – and, in so doing, make available external funds go as far as possible. But, of course, the issue is not simply one of infrastructure provision. International agencies arguably have an even more important role to play in encouraging and facilitating a culture of local democracy and participation and in creating opportunities to share and replicate good practices and positive experiences.

While some agencies lag behind, others recognize the relevance of their work in urban areas. Thus, for example, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has a Decentralized Governance Programme, a Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment – a pilot project to construct practical models of local partnerships to tackle urban poverty – as well as a long-running Urban Management Programme, while the World Bank has a specific Urban Development sector responsible for promoting equity, reducing poverty and encouraging sustainability in towns and cities. Bilateral agencies that address urban issues include the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID), which has an Infrastructure and Urban Development Department that works on urban policy and good practice, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), which runs urban programmes that concentrate on environment, transport, housing, cultural environment, urban poverty and specific gender equality issues. A number of NGOs also have significant urban programmes, including CARE – the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere – which runs multi-sectoral projects based upon community participation, and MISEREOR, which likewise promotes community organizations in poor urban areas and provides support for the most vulnerable urban groups.

This section contains information about some of the major UN agencies and international and regional NGOs working on issues related to birth registration. These contacts should serve as links to other types of organizations, particularly national and local NGOs, professional and community organizations, academic and other institutes and government bodies, whose work is relevant to this issue. It is not intended to be a comprehensive listing, nor does it prioritize or rank the organizations listed.

UNITED NATIONS AND ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour: IPEC

International Labour Office
4, route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva 22
Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 799 8181
Fax: +41 22 799 8771
Email: ipec@ilo.org

Activities
IPEC works towards the progressive elimination of child labour by strengthening national capacities and by creating a world-wide movement to combat child labour. IPEC is currently running projects in more than 60 countries.
Website: www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec

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Email: florencectcsecr@unicef.org

Activities
The International Secretariat for Child Friendly Cities, based at the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, aims to coordinate the growing number of activities emerging from the global Child Friendly Cities Initiative. By distilling and sharing information on initiatives to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in cities, the Secretariat supports Municipal Authorities in their efforts to address these rights. The International Secretariat focuses on three areas: data gathering and field research; information exchange; and networking.
Website: www.childfriendlycities.org

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

3 UN Plaza
New York, NY 10017
USA
Tel.: +1 212 326 7000
Fax: +1 212 888 7465
Email: netmaster@unicef.org

Activities
UNICEF promotes the equal rights of children and women, guided by the CRC and CEDAW, through action and advocacy programmes at international, regional, national and local level. It works with governmental and non-governmental partners.
Website: www.unicef.org

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

1 UN Plaza
New York, NY 10017
USA
Tel.: +1 212 906 5558
Fax: +1 212 906 5001

Activities
UNDP works with the governments of developing countries to promote policies that protect the rights of the poor, especially women, and help them gain access to financial, social and legal services.
Website: www.undp.org

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) / Growing Up in Cities

7 Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris
France
Tel.: +33 1 45 68 1813
Fax: +33 1 45 68 5626/28

Activities
UNESCO promotes cooperation among nations through education, science, culture and communication. Through its Management of Social Transformation programme (MOST), UNESCO is directly involved in the Growing Up in Cities initiative, a global effort to address issues affecting urban children and youth. The initiative involves young people in the evaluation of their own circumstances and the definition of their priorities and works with them to create better communities.
Website: www.unesco.org
www.unesco.org/most/guic/guicmain.htm

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) / Global Campaign on Urban Governance

P.O. Box 30030
Nairobi
Kenya
Tel.: 254 2 623141
Fax: 254 2 624265
Email: habitat@unchs.org
govern@unchs.org

Activities
UN-Habitat is the lead agency within the United Nations system for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda – the global plan of action adopted by the international community at the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul, Turkey in June 1996. Its activities contribute to the overall objective of the United Nations system to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development within the context of a rapidly urbanizing world. UN-Habitat coordinates the Global Campaign for Urban Governance which promotes accountable and transparent urban governance in favour of all sectors of society, particularly the urban poor, and strives to overcome all forms of exclusion.
Website: www.unhabitat.org
www.unchs.org/govern/

World Health Organization (WHO)

CH 1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 791 2111
Fax: +41 22 791 3111
Email: info@WHO.ch

Activities
WHO gives world-wide guidance in the health field, sets global standards for health, cooperates with governments to strengthen health programmes and develops appropriate health technology, information and standards. WHO has a long-term initiative entitled Healthy Cities which aims to improve the health and well-being of people living and working in urban areas. It is based on a number of key principles: that health should be an integral part of settlements management and development; that health can be improved by modifying the physical, social and economic environment; that conditions in settings such as the home, school, village, workplace, and city profoundly influence health status, and that intersectoral coordination for health is necessary at the local level.
Website: www.who.ch

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INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL NGOS, INSTITUTIONS AND NETWORKS

Casa Alianza – Covenant House
SJO 1039 - PO Box 025216
Miami FL 33102-5216
USA
Email: bruce@casa-alianza.org

Activities
Casa Alianza is an independent, non-profit making organization working with street children in several South American countries. As well as providing services for street children, it advocates with and for them. Casa Alianza works within the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to combat illegal adoption, child trafficking and the exploitation of children as a labour force.
Website: www.casa-alianza.org

Child Friendly Cities Initiative
c/o The Malaysian Council for Child Welfare
No.25-A, Jalan Kampung Pandan
55100 Kuala Lampur
Malaysia
Tel.: 603 985 0309
Fax: 603 983 2400
Email: unicef@ppp.nasionet.net

Activities
This is a community based initiative to promote child friendly environments in Malaysian cities within the context of UNICEF's International Child Friendly Cities Initiative, which works towards helping to translate the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) into concrete actions that can be implemented at the local level by anyone. The website was set up to make the Malaysian Child Friendly Cities Initiative more accessible, and to provide easy access to the materials and ideas inherent to the initiative.
Website: www.childfriendly.org.my

Child-Friendly Movement, Philippines
UNICEF Philippines
6/F NEDA sa Makati Building
106 Amorsolo Street
Legaspi Village Makati City
Philippines
Tel.: 63 2 8920611
Fax: 63 2 8101453
Email: manila@unicef.org

Activities
The Child-Friendly Movement (CFM) aims to generate the political will and provide the programme framework and mechanisms to bring about the realization of children's rights to survival, protection, development and participation. The CFM involves working with families, communities, local and national governments, as well as the private sector, NGOs, religious communities and the media.
Website: www.unicef.org/philippines/

Child Rights Information Network (CRIN)
c/o Save the Children
17 Grove Lane
London SE5 8RD
UK
Tel.: + 44 207 716 2240
Fax: + 44 207 793 7628
Email: info@crin.org

Activities
The Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) is a global network that disseminates information about the Convention on the Rights of the Child and child rights among non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies, inter-governmental organizations, educational institutions, and other child rights experts. The network is supported, and receives funding from, UNICEF, Rädda Barnen, Save the Children UK and the International Save the Children Alliance. CRIN works with partners in Africa, the Americas, Asia, the Arab World and Europe in order to promote child rights worldwide.
Website: www.crin.org

Child and Youth Friendly Communities (CYFC)
Society for Children and Youth of British Columbia
3644 Slocan Street
Vancouver, BC
V5M 3E8
Canada
Tel.: 604 433 4180
Fax: 604 433 9611
Email: scy@portal.ca

Activities
The CYFC Project, developed from the Child Friendly Housing Project run by the Society for Children and Youth, helps community groups, including children and youth themselves, to assess their neighbourhoods through the eyes of young people and to engage in activities that improve their safety and wellbeing.
Website:
www.scyofbc.org/cyfc/cyfc.html

Cities Alliance
Mailstop F-4P-400
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433
Tel.: +1 202 473 9233
Fax: +1 202 522 3224
Email: info@citiesalliance.org

Activities
The Cities Alliance is a joint initiative of the World Bank and UN-Habitat. The Alliance aims to create new tools, practical approaches and knowledge sharing to promote local economic development and to make a direct impact upon urban poverty. It is a broad and growing partnership of bilateral and multilateral agencies, donors and associations of local authorities, aimed at mobilising global commitment and resources. The World Bank has also launched a new urban and local government development strategy.
Website: www.citiesalliance.org

Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini
c/o Istituto degli Innocenti
Piazza SS. Annunziata, 12
50122 Florence
Italy
Tel.: +39 055 2037359
Fax: +39 055 2037207
Email: cittasostenibili@minori.it

Activities
The Project "Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini" (Sustainable Cities for Children) is promoted by Italy's Environment Ministry in collaboration with the network of Italian municipalities committed to implementing Agenda 21 and the commitments made at Habitat II. Local and national associations operating in the areas of child participation, planning and sustainable development support the programme with experimental initiatives and social mobilisation campaigns that contribute to a national effort directed at urban children.
Website:
www.cittasostenibili.minori.it

European Child Friendly Cities Network
c/o Kind en Samenleving
Nieuwelaan 63
B-1860 Meise
Belgium
Tel.: +32 2 272 07 50
Fax: +32 2 269 78 72
Email: jvanglis@ndo.be

Activities
The ECFCN promotes the rights and interests of children in local communities. In particular, it supports children's participation in decision-making processes at local or regional levels with the aim of developing a culture of inclusion and responsibility.

Human Rights Cities

The People's Movement for Human Rights Education (PDHRE) / NY Office
526 West 111th Street
New York, NY 10025
Tel.: +1 212 7493156
Fax: +1 212 6666325
Email: pdhre@igc.apc.org

Activities

PDHRE develops and facilitates training in human rights education in more than 60 countries. Since 1998 it has worked alongside local communities to development the Human Rights Cities initiative. This is aimed at promoting an understanding of human rights and ensuring that laws, policies and resource allocations in urban areas promote these rights.

Website: www.pdhre.org

International Association of the Child's Right to Play (IPA)

See website for national contacts

Activities

IPA is an interdisciplinary NGO providing an international forum and advocacy for the promotion of play opportunities. Membership is open to any individual, group or organization which endorses the IPA Declaration of the Child's Right to Play. IPA organizes regional and international conferences, workshops, symposia and study tours and holds a triennial World Congress. IPA offers advice to national governments and UN agencies on issues and problems related to the implementation of the child's right to play.

Website: www.ipaworld.org

International Institute for Environment and Development

3 Endsleigh Street
London WC1H 0DD
UK
Tel.: +44 207 3882117
Fax: +44 207 3882826
Email: mailbox@iied.org

Activities

IIED aims to provide expertise and leadership in researching and achieving sustainable development at local, national, regional and global levels. In alliance with others it seeks to help shape a future that ends global poverty and delivers and sustains efficient and equitable management of the world's natural resources. The Institute has an affiliate organization, IIED-América Latina, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Website: www.iied.org

International Union of Local Authorities (IULA)

IULA World Secretariat
P.O. Box 90646
2509 LP The Hague
The Netherlands
Tel.: +31 70 306 6066
Fax: +31 70 350 0496
Email: iula@iula.org

Activities

IULA promotes democratic local self-government world-wide. It has Regional Sections for Asia and the Pacific, North America, Latin America, Central America, Africa, Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East and Europe. Each Section runs its own local government training courses, sets up information and documentation services, conducts research and consultancy projects, and promotes municipal international cooperation. The World Secretariat, based in The Hague, Netherlands, has a global representation and coordination role.

Website: www.iula-int.org

The Italian Committee for UNICEF

Comitato Italiano per l'UNICEF
Via V. E. Orlando, 83
00185 Rome
Italy
Tel.: +39 06 478091
Fax: +39 06 47809270
Email: info@unicef.it

Activities

The Italian Committee for UNICEF operates with a network of 104 provincial and regional sub-committees covering all of Italy. Among the Committee's ongoing programmes are: development education in schools; Mayors Defenders of Children; the national project on "Sustainable cities for children (in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment); and the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.

Website: www.unicef.it

Mobile Crèches

DIZ Area, Raja Bazaar, Sector IV
(near Gole Market)
New Delhi –110001
India
Tel.: 011 3347635, 3363271
Email: mobilecreches1@vsnl.net

Activities

Mobile Crèches offers programmes of healthcare, nutrition and non-formal education to the children of construction workers and women in the informal sector in the cities of Delhi, Mumbai and Pune. As well as providing training for its own workers, Mobile Crèches conducts customised training for NGOs, government agencies and community workers.

Website: www.mobilecreches.org

National Low Income Housing Coalition

1012 Fourteenth Street
NW Suite 610
Washington DC 20005
USA
Tel.: +1 202 662 1530
Fax: +1 202 393 1973
Email: memo@nlihc.org

Activities

The coalition educates, organizes and advocates to ensure decent, affordable housing within healthy neighbourhoods for everyone. It provides up-to-date information, formulates policy and educates the public on housing needs and strategies for solutions.

Website: www.nlihc.org

NGO Committee on UNICEF

UNICEF HQ, UNICEF House
3 UN Plaza
New York NY 10017
USA
Tel.: +1 212 824 6394
Fax: +1 212 824 6466
Email: ngocommittee@unicef.org

Activities

Established in 1952, the NGO Committee is a world-wide network of 125 NGOs working for children in more than 110 countries. It encourages consultation and cooperation among NGOs at all levels and with UNICEF to promote the well-being of children and to provide a forum for dialogue on children's issues and the work of UNICEF.

NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child

c/o Defence for Children International
1 rue de Varambé PO Box 88
CH-1211 Geneva 20
Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 740 4730
Fax: +41 22 740 1145
Email: dci-ngo.group@pingnet.ch

Activities

The Group coordinates input into the Committee on the Rights of the Child. It also monitors the Alternative Reports submitted to this Committee, and these often comment on the efficacy of birth registration practice in the country

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concerned. Sub-groups follow such topics as child labour, sexual exploitation, refugee children and children in armed conflict, children in conflict with the law and children's issues in education and the media.
Website:
www.crin.org/NGOGroupforCRC

Programa de Gestión Urbana, Coordinación Regional para América Latina y el Caribe
García Moreno 751 entre Bolivar y Sucre
Casilla 17-01-2505
Quito
Ecuador
Tel.: + 593 2 583961- 282361 / 364
Email: pgu@impsat.net.ec
pgu@pgu-ecu.org

Activities
This initiative is one of the six regionally-based schemes that form part of the global Urban Management Programme Office managed by UN-Habitat. The initiative has helped to institutionalize and formalize participatory governance in the region, and has had a positive impact on improving living conditions for poor and excluded communities.
Website: www.pgualc.org

Shikshalaya Prakalpa: A school for every child, every child in school
State Resource Group for Education of Deprived Urban Children (SRGEDUC)
Loreto Day School, Sealdah, 122 AJC Bose Road
Kolkata, West Bengala
700 014 India
Tel.: 91 2463845
Fax: 91 2270229
Email: smcyril@caltiger.com

Activities
The principal activities of this organization, which aims to promote the rights of all children in Kolkata, are discussed in Box 15 of this Digest. No website.

Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Block C, Wisma UN
Kompleks Pejabat Damansara
Jalan Dungun, Damansara Heights
50490 Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia
Tel.: 603 2559122
Fax: 603 2532361
Email: tugi@undp.org

Activities
The TUGI project is developed and funded by UNDP and implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). TUGI assists local authorities in improving urban quality of life by strengthening their capacities, enhancing the tools available to local decision-makers and by promoting good governance principles. Outcomes have included the development of appropriate indicators, tools and methodologies that are grounded in a regionally specific definition of good governance.
Website: www.tugi.apdip.net

Urban Poor Associates (UPA)
80-A Malakas Street
Brgy. Pinyahan
Quezon City 1100
Philippines
Tel.: 02 426 4119, 426 4132
Fax: 02 426 4118
Email: upamla@codewan.com.ph

Activities
UPA is a Philippines-based NGO made up of individuals with experience in various aspects of urban poverty. They work together on projects but also continue working along their own lines of interest with the urban poor. UPA provides them with a common secretariat and library, as well as a modest but regular income. UPA concentrates on direct grassroots anti-eviction work, research and publication and media work.
Website: www.codewan.com.ph/urban_poor/about/upa.htm

ADDITIONAL WEB RESOURCES

www.bestpractices.org
The Best Practices database is a joint initiative by UN-Habitat and the Together Foundation, supported by the Municipality of Dubai, the Best Practices Partners and the UK Government, that draws together and documents practical urban solutions from communities around the world. The database is searchable by region, country, eco-system, partners, keywords and area of impact (solid waste, housing, poverty reduction etc.).

www.crin.org
The Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) is a global network that disseminates information about the Convention on the Rights of the Child and child rights amongst non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies, inter-governmental organizations, educational institutions and other child rights experts. The network is supported, and receives funding from, UNICEF, Rädda Barnen, Save the Children UK and the International Save the Children Alliance. Extensive information, resources and publications are available on this website.

www.childfriendlycities.org
UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities secretariat has created a detailed database to organize information relating to programme initiatives, research findings and publications that focus on the new role being played by cities in the areas of child rights, child participation and services for children. The site also includes examples from Child Friendly Cities, providing a quick review of experiences around the world.

www.hri.ca
Human Rights Internet (HRI) is dedicated to the empowerment of human rights activists and organizations, and to the education of governmental and intergovernmental agencies, officials and other actors on human rights issues and the role of civil society. HRI has a child's rights programme highlighting such areas as legal rights and protection.

www.eldis.org
Eldis provides extensive links to online information on development in areas such as the environment, agriculture, disasters, human rights, civil rights and population. It also provides access to statistical information, major international organizations, research organizations, bibliographical information and databases.

www.oneworld.net
OneWorld promotes human rights and sustainable development. The website provides information and articles on a vast range of human rights issues and coverage is global.

www.umn.edu/humanrts/index.html
The University of Minnesota Human Rights Library, developed by the University's Human Rights Centre, offers more than 7,200 human rights documents and materials on-line. These include treaties and other international instruments, regional materials, bibliographies and research guides, refugee and asylum sources, and links to over 3,000 other sites. The site also provides a search engine that can search for documents on multiple human rights sites.

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2 *A World Fit for Children* (2002), outcome document of the Special Session, A/AC.256/CRP.6/Rev.3, para 30. UNICEF, New York.

3 The most recent estimates by the UN Population Division suggest that 47 per cent of the world's population lived in urban areas by the year 2000 and this will rise to 49 per cent in 2005 and 51.1 per cent in 2010. This probably understates the proportion of the world's population living in urban areas by several percentage points, as some of the world's most populous nations use criteria for defining urban centres that exclude many large settlements with significant non-agricultural economic bases and employment structures; see UNCHS (Habitat) (1996), *An Urbanizing World: Global Report on Human Settlements, 1996*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York.

4 By 2000, Africa had an urban population of 297.1 million while Northern America had 239 million. Africa also has around twice as many children within its population as Northern America – see United Nations (2000), *World Urbanization Prospects: The 1999 Revision*, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ESA/P/WP.161; United Nations (2001), *World Population Prospects: The 2000 Revision (Highlights)*, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, ESA/P/WP.165, New York.

5 More than a billion children live in urban areas. Between 30 and 50 per cent of urban populations are officially estimated to live in poverty. Thus, at a conservative estimate, some 300 to 500 million children live in poverty.

6 Hardoy, Jorge E., Diana Mitlin and David Satterthwaite (2001), *Environmental Problems in an Urbanizing World: Finding Solutions for Cities in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, Earthscan Publications, London; UNCHS (1996) op.cit.

7 Swart-Kruger, Jill (2000), *Growing up in Canaansland: Children's Recommendations on Improving a Squatter Camp Environment*, HSRC Publishers, Pretoria.

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10 Provisional population data from Government of India, Registrar General of India (2002), Census of India 2001.

11 International Institute for Population Sciences (2000), National Family Health Survey 2, Mumbai.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Jonsson, Åsa and David Satterthwaite (2001), "The limitations of income-based poverty lines", Paper prepared for the Panel on Urban Population Dynamics, Committee on Population, National Research Council/National Academy of Sciences, Washington DC.

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16 'What is Good Governance?' United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, www.unescap.org/huset/gg/governance.htm, accessed 2.7.2002.

17 Information provided by UNHCHR, Geneva, April 2002. For further information consult www.unhchr.ch/housing/ introduction.htm

18 Definition of the right to adequate housing as proposed by the Special Rapporteur, UN Report E/CN.4/2001/51, para. 8.

19 For an evaluation of the attention given to the physical environment in the reporting system for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, see Bartlett, Sheridan (2002), *The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Reporting System and the Physical Environment*, Save the Children Sweden, Stockholm.

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21 *'A World Fit for Children'*, op. cit., para 30.

22 Ibid, paras 55 and 56.

23 United Nations (2000), op. cit. at note 4.

24 Menegat, Rualdo (main coordinator) (1998), *Atlas Ambiental de Porto Alegre*, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Prefeitura Municipal de Porto Alegre y Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais, Porto Alegre.

25 1999 figure from UNICEF (2000), *The State of the World's Children 2001*, UNICEF, New York.

26 United Nations (2001), *World Urbanization Prospects: The 1999 Revision*, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ST/ESA/SER.A/194.

27 Rapid rates of natural increase, of themselves, contribute little or nothing to increased urbanization (as they do not change the proportions of people living in rural and urban areas) but they can be the main factor in the growth of urban populations – and they often are in nations with high rates of natural increase.

28 Jonsson and Satterthwaite (2001) op cit; Tabatabai, Hamid with Manal Fouad (1993), *The Incidence of Poverty in Developing Countries; an ILO Compendium of Data*, A World Employment Programme Study, International Labour Office, Geneva.

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32 Islam, Nazrul with Mohammad Khan, Nurul Islam and Mohammad Habibur Rahman (1997), "Reforming Governance in Dhaka, Bangladesh". Paper presented at the GURI Conference on Governance in Action: Urban Initiatives in a Global Setting, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, Toronto.

33 Bijlmakers, L.A., Mary T. Bassett and David M. Sanders (1998), *Socio-economic Stress, Health and Child Nutrition Status in Zimbabwe at a Time of Economic Structural Adjustment*, Research Report No. 105, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala.

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36 Jonsson and Satterthwaite (2001), op. cit.

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39 Jonsson and Satterthwaite (2001), op. cit.

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42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
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45 Bennett, Neil L, Jiali Li, Youghwan Song and Kemin Yang (1999), *Young Children in Poverty: A Statistical Update*, June 1999, National Centre for Children in Poverty, Columbia University, New York.
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48 Micklewright, John (2000), 'Macroeconomics and Data on Children', *Innocenti Working Papers, No. 73*, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence.
49 UNCHS (1996), op. cit.
50 Bennet, Neil G., Jiali Li, Younghwan Song and Keming Yang (1999), *Young Children in poverty: A Statisitcal Update, June 1999 Edition*, National Centre for Children in Poverty, Colombia University, New York.
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POVERTY AND EXCLUSION AMONG URBAN CHILDREN

The cities of the world are often regarded as hubs of wealth and privilege, but they are also home to hundreds of millions of children for whom poverty and exclusion are a daily reality. Some of these children live on the street; many more live in dangerous, insanitary housing which often lacks the most basic amenities, including clean water and satisfactory sanitation. These urban children rarely have access to adequate services, including schooling, or to safe areas for play and recreation. The imperative of economic survival can mean not only that parents are unable to dedicate sufficient time to childcare, but also that children themselves are forced to work, often in hazardous conditions. Yet all this need not be the case: this Digest examines the potential of good urban governance founded upon human rights principles to promote positive change for and with children. The key to eradicating urban poverty and exclusion lies in the development of child-friendly cities where children's rights are made a priority in budgeting, planning and resource allocation and where children's voices inform the democratic process.

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